

THE
R I N G,
A
N O V E L:
IN A
SERIES OF LETTERS.
BY A YOUNG LADY.
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

Should stern Adversity's rude storms assail,
Let not JESSICA's hope nor spirits fail:
In each sad hour of sorrow or distress,
Still let her not despair of happiness:
Still let her trust, the Donor of this Ring,
May future years of peace and pleasure bring.

D U B L I N:

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M,DCC,LXXXIV.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Work was transmitted to the Editor as the production of a very young Lady, who appears to possess a luxuriancy of fancy, and other natural requisites of a Novelist. But as in juvenile performances, so in the subsequent pages, instances will occur of the powers of imagination unrestrained by the ripened judgment of maturer age. Conceiving, however, the materials to be not undeserving of correction and arrangement, the Editor has endeavoured to exhibit them in the most embellishing light; and if partiality should not too much influence opinion, the Volumes now presented to the Public, will furnish a pleasing entertainment to those Readers for whose gratification they are principally intended.



THE
HISTORY
OF
Lady Jemima Guzman.

LETTER I.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

Dear Ned,

I HAVE catch'd up my pen in order to ask you,
“Why parents are suffered to rule over their
children after the important age of twenty-one?”

Is not that the time they have fixed for our becoming our own masters? Wherefore, then, as that important period is expired with me, do my wise parents wish to keep me in this stupid place? 'Tis true, they do not say, “You shall not go to London;” but their cry is, “Indeed, Harry, you must not leave us just yet:” and this spoke in such a kind tone by father, mother, and sister, that let me have formed ever such wise resolutions of going to Town, they were all set flying before night. But, hark! I hear

hear my sister's voice enquiring for me to take a walk. I must, therefore, go; though sure to come home as much in the vapours as if I had been to church, which, by the bye, I am often obliged to do. But I am called again; so must bid you adieu.

Yours, as usual,

HENRY BELVILLE.

LETTER II.

Miss Belville to Lady Carolina Benson.

My dear friend,

WHY am I still to be deprived of the bewitching company of the dear partner of my infant days! Are you determined never to quit the gay scenes of a London life? Have you not often said—but I will here repeat your own words,—“I never will launch, like most other young people of fashion, all at once into the gay circle of life. A house in town I must have, to come to in winter, or I shall not appear like other people; but the summer shall be spent with my dear Matilda.”—Two summers, however, are elapsed, and yet I have seen nothing of my dear Caroline; nay, you have not even wrote to me so often as usual.

I am not conscious of having offended you in any shape. If I have, let me know it, and I will try to repair my fault; but till then will write on as usual.

My brother, as I suppose you have heard, has had the honour of being preferred to the rank of Colonel. He begins to be very desirous of going to town; but my father and mother, knowing what a thoughtless fellow he is (though I believe an honest never existed) are anxious to detain him, though (sorry I am to say it) very much against his will.

Well,

Well, I think now, for the first time in my life, I should like to spend a winter in London; for when I was there, I was very young, and then thought it the most stupid, hot, dusty place I ever saw. 'Tis true, they told me I did not see it to advantage, as it was in the month of August, when all the people of fashion had quitted it: but there must be something enchanting in it in winter, or it would never make my dear Caroline forget one whom she always honoured with her esteem.

Pray, my dear, is Miss Meadows with you still? I wish you would give my compliments to her, if she is, and beg her to write me the reason of your Ladyship's neglect: but perhaps the number of your admirers makes you so remiss. However, I will leave off *supposing*, and finish my letter with reminding you, that this is the third I have written without receiving any answer.

I have nothing farther to add, than to desire you will send me a long epistle, with your reasons for so painful a silence; for such, I assure you, it has been to

Your affectionate and sincere friend,
MATILDA BELVILLE.

LETTER III.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

MY Julia in her last chides me for not writing; but, indeed, I have been very ill. My situation with Lady Caroline Benson grows more and more irksome to me every day: her mode of living does not at all please your *Jemima*; never easy except when in public, and out of humour if all the men do not treat her with gallantry.

HISTORY OF

Her Ladyship, at this present moment, has four humble admirers to attend her; yet I don't believe she feels the least partiality for any of them; though she romps, chats, and sings with them, and never appears so happy as when they are near her.

Neither do I think the company she keeps at all to be coveted. 'Tis true, they are all people of rank; but the females are made up of pride, affectation, and coquetry; whilst the males are deceitful, insolent fops! Now, my dear, do you think either her Ladyship or I stand any chance of edification or improvement from such acquaintance? There is one gentleman, however, I would wish her to like, especially as he proves very troublesome to me; but for that reason, and that only, I believe she despises him. That Sir John Dudley was in love with Lady Caroline, I am pretty certain: whether he is now equally enamoured of her or not, I cannot pretend to say. If I am to believe him, all his affection is converted from her Ladyship to me. As a friend I esteem him; but as a husband he will never be approved by

Your affectionate friend,
JEMIMA MEADOWS.

LETTER IV.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

SING *lo triumphe*, dear Ned; since you may assure yourself and all my friends, that in less than a week you and they will see me in that seat of pleasure, dear London!

Yours, as usual,
H. BELVILLE.

LETTER

Lady JEMIMA GUZMAN. 9

LETTER V.

Captain Hillgrove to Colonel Belville.

I NEED not tell my friend Harry how glad I am to hear he is coming to town; at the same time I am sorry to inform him, I shall not have the pleasure of seeing him, as I am obliged to set off for Yorkshire immediately: his next letter, therefore, must be directed for me at Sir Charles Burton's. Adieu, my dear friend; for I have not time to write more than

Yours,

EDWARD HILLGROVE.

LETTER VI.

Lady Caroline Benson to Miss Spencer.

Dear Bell,

FOR Heaven's sake, where are you? Do you never intend to visit London again? Why, child, you will stay at the Abbey till all your friends have forgot you! Surely, you must be mad to live so long with an old superannuated uncle, merely, forsooth, because he says, he can't do without your company. But, believe me, 'tis only that you may look after his house and servants, that he won't part with you.—Now for my own affairs.

You ask if I have no intention of marrying? None in the least, my dear: in short, I don't know a man whom I think worthy to be my husband. There was one—but he left me to dangle after Jemima.—Ah, Bell! I wish I had never taken that girl into my house! However, I have one comfort; I believe she won't be here much longer; for she

perceives I slight her; and as she has no small share of spirit or pride, she won't chuse to bear with my—
But I am interrupted.

Yours,

C. BENSON.

LETTER VII

Miss Thornton to Miss Meadows.

Dear Jemima,

I FELT no little pain to learn from your last epistle, that you had been indisposed; my anxiety for your happiness, however, was still increased, when I found that your situation with Lady Caroline grew every day more and more disagreeable. Why does my Jemima stay with her? Why not fly to her Julia, who would receive her with open arms, as, I am certain, my father would also; for he often asks after you? We have likewise a very sociable neighbourhood, and I have lately met with a very agreeable acquaintance in a Miss Walpole: but I will inform you how I first met with her.

I was walking in the Wood after dinner (while my father was taking his usual nap) with a book in my hand, till I had insensibly strayed farther than I intended, and should have pursued my walk, had I not been stopped by the sound of music, accompanied by the sweetest voice, except my Jemima's, I ever heard. I stood still to observe whence it came, when looking through a thicket, I perceived a young lady sitting in a small arbour, or rather alcove, playing on a guitar, which she accompanied with her voice, my favourite song of "Let not rage thy bosom fire." When she came to the line "I, alas! at once have lost," her voice faltered, and a shower of tears prevented her from proceeding.

ing. I stood petrified for some moments, when a sudden shower of hail roused me from my reverie. I still stopped in a kind of suspense what to do, whether to go forward or turn back, when a violent clap of thunder, at which you know I am very much alarmed, forced me on. The fair unknown likewise started, and perceiving me as she rose, seemed surprised; but, advancing, begged (for I believe I looked very much frightened) I would walk into the house. I thanked her, and accepted her offer. The thunder and lightning were so dreadfully rapid, that neither of us spoke till we entered it; but when we got to it, I never saw a place more neat or more delightful. In the course of our conversation afterwards, I asked her how long she had been there? She answered, about two months. The storm now abating, I took my leave, knowing my dear father would be very uneasy. She requested me to repeat my visit, which you will readily suppose I was not unwilling to comply with. She has been several times at The Wood, but always avoids company. All I know of her is her name. My father admires her very much. I wish you could see her, as I am sure you would think as partially of her, as

Your sincere friend,

JULIA THORNTON.

L E T T E R VIII.

Sir John Dudley to Sir Charles Wilmot.

Dear Charles,

I Received your agreeable, though short letter, and was extremely rejoiced to hear of your safe arrival in England. In answer to your question, "how "affairs go on with me?" indeed, my friend, I hardly know how to answer you. If you remember,

her, the last letter I wrote from Cambridge, I told you that I had formed an acquaintance with a Lady Caroline Benson; a very fine woman, whom, as such, I admired; till at last I thought myself in love with her. I accordingly made her an offer of my hand and fortune, both which she thought proper to refuse. I, for my part, was neither pleased nor displeased, and desisted from visiting her several days. But being one night at the play, and seeing her Ladyship enter the opposite box accompanied by another lady who appeared to be extremely handsome, I quitted the box I was in, and went round to theirs. Lady Caroline, as usual, was all gaiety, giddiness and giggle; while her fair companion reminded me of Milton's

————— pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure.

I addressed myself several times to her. She answered me with great politeness; but at the same time seemed desirous of declining all conversation.

When the Play was finished, I conducted both the ladies to their coach; and the next morning paid a visit to Lady Caroline, whom, to my great joy, I found quite alone. After the usual compliments were passed on both sides, I took occasion to ask her who the lady was I had seen with her the preceding evening?—Lady Caroline pretended at first to have forgot whom I meant; but at last recollecting herself——“O! Jemima Meadows you mean!——”
“She lives with me——We saw one another in
“the country. I took a liking to her so much,
“that I asked her to come and live with me.—
“She complied, as she wanted to be a companion
“to a lady; for the poor thing has neither father
“nor mother.” This was all I could learn from her ladyship. In short, Charles, I conversed with
the

the charming Jemima very often, and found her so sensible and unaffectedly agreeable, that I fancied myself a second time in love, and in consequence made her an offer of my hand and fortune. To my great surprize, however, she rejected them; and told me, that "though she should always esteem me as a friend, she could never think of me as a husband."

Now, Wilmot, won't you call me a whimsical fellow, if I assure you, her refusal gave me more pleasure than pain? I love her, 'tis true, but it is more with the affection of a brother than that of a lover. Adieu!

Believe me to be

Your sincere friend,

JOHN DUDLEY.

LETTER IX.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

I Received my dear Julia's letter last night, and am very much obliged to her for the description of Miss Walpole: I likewise thank you for your kind invitation to The Wood; but at the same time cannot accept it. I will tell you a piece of news: I have two new lovers; the one a baronet, the other a squire: Sir William Meredith and Mr. Darcy. Sir William is about thirty, well made, but has a very plain face, and is very blunt: the other is tolerable in person, and well behaved; yet neither of these will be the man.—But my hair-dresser waits; I must, therefore, bid you adieu for the present; but will resume my pen when I return from the Opera.

IN CONTINUATION.

Gracious Heaven ! my dear Julia, how has your Jemima been alarmed ! That vile Sir William Meredith !—my very blood recoils at his name—but I will try to give you some account of the shocking affair !

I think I told you I was going to the Opera : accordingly Lady Caroline and I went in her coach. We had not been long in the house before Sir William joined us. When the Opera was over, he handed us to the carriage, and putting us in, begged he might attend us. We readily assented ; but had scarcely got out of the Haymarket before the coach broke down. Lady Caroline and I screaming out for help, several people came to assist us, and got us out without receiving any hurt, except that of fright. Mine was so great, that I fainted away.

I knew nothing that passed for some time ; but on recovering a little, found myself in a strange room, with my head reclined on the bosom of Sir William Meredith. Raising myself up, I eagerly enquired where I was, and what was become of Lady Caroline ? Instead of answering my question, he begged me to compose myself : as to her Ladyship, he said, she was very safe, and, he supposed, by that time at home. Having said this, he attempted to take me in his arms ; but starting from him, I exclaimed, “ Good Heavens ! Lady Caroline gone home ! “ where then am I ?

“ With a man, my angel, who adores you,” again advancing towards me.

I retreated to the door, and attempted to open it, but found it locked. Terrified as I was, and ready to sink with apprehension, I turned to him, and said, “ For God’s sake, Sir William, tell me, what does “ all this mean ? Explain this mystery.”

“ I will

“ I will (returned he) if Miss Meadows will be seated.”

I thought it best to assent. Then, as if recollecting himself, “ But I think, madam, you had better retire, and defer explanations till you have had some rest.”

“ Rest !” exclaimed I, interrupting him, and starting from my chair, “ do you think I will stay to take rest in a house I know nothing of ?”

He smiled, and in a careless manner replied, “ You are likely to do it, I assure you, Madam :” then advancing to me, and taking my hand, he made the following audacious speech, which I had no power to interrupt :

“ You had better compose yourself, Madam ; for be assured you are entirely in my power. From the first moment I saw you, I adored you. I enquired your connections and family, to both of which every body was a stranger. As I could not think of marrying a woman (though that woman is the loveliest of her sex) who had neither rank, birth, nor fortune to recommend her to the world, I took this method, however singular it may appear, to get you into my power. Be assured, my lovely *Jemima*,” pressing my hand, “ that myself, fortune, servants, every thing shall be at your disposal.—I will retire with you to any part of England the most agreeable to you, till the talk of the town is a little over.”

Here he stopp’d, as if waiting for my reply. As to myself, it is impossible to describe how I felt ; but my head grew giddy, my blood chilled in every vein, and I fell senseless on the floor. How long I continued in this situation I know not ; but when I recovered I found myself on a sofa, the vile Sir William kneeling at my feet, with both my hands in his, which he pressed alternately, and a vulgar ill looking woman, who stood bathing my temples with
hartshorn.

hartshorn. I trembled at the sight ; but a flood of tears coming to my relief, revived me : when rising from my seat with a composure I did not think I could have assumed, I thus addressed him : (as I began to speak, he made a motion for the woman to retire)

“ Pray, Sir, does Lady Caroline know of your intentions ? and is it with her concurrence that you have thus vilely trepanned me ? ”

“ No, Madam, she does not, I assure you. ”

“ How comes it, then, she did not wait till I was able to attend her ? ”

He seemed at a loss ; but recollecting himself, he replied,

“ Why, Madam, the fright you was in by the lucky or unlucky accident of the breaking down of your carriage, forced the surrounding crowd to carry you into the first house that was open. Lady Caroline, distressed beyond measure at your situation, and thinking it impossible to remove you, asked the people if they could accommodate you with a bed ? They immediately complied, and ordered one to be got ready. You opened your eyes, but as often closed them again. Her Ladyship’s servants then appearing, informed her that a coach waited to convey her home : she pressed your hand, and recommending you to the care of the people and myself, retired. ”

Here he stopped. I shuddered to think that one of my own sex should have so little humanity, honour, or feeling, as to leave a young woman like me, unprotected, and without a friend of my own sex near me, to the care of strangers, whom she and I had never seen before, and likewise to the discretion of a man of whom she had no reason to entertain a very good opinion.

“ Well, Sir, (replied I) and is this the house which Lady Caroline was so obliging as to leave me in ? ”

He

He hesitated; but on repeating my question, answered, "It is not, Madam."

Again I shuddered; but fear made me proceed.

"And pray, Sir, after Lady Caroline's *obliging* recommendation of me to the people, how came they to let me go, especially in the weak state I was in?"

He paus'd a little; then with a smile which seemed to be forced said, "Upon my honour, Madam, you are the prettiest interrogator I ever heard! But there is no person in England besides your lovely self should dare to interrogate me thus."

"This, Sir," returned I, with a serious air, "is not a time for me to be trifled with; therefore pray answer my question immediately."

He then came forward, and taking my hand, "If I thought my lovely judge would prove favourable, I might be tempted to comply with her request."

"You may depend on all which lays in my power. Pray, proceed."

"As soon as Lady Caroline was gone, we all thought you appeared to recover; I therefore told the people, that as my"—Here he again paused, and seemed at a loss; but at last repeated, "that as my sister—"

"Your sister! cried I, starting.

"Yes, my lovely girl"—again offering to take my hand, tho' I still drew back—"I ventured to call you by that endearing name, lest the people should prevent your going."

Lifting up my eyes to Heaven and clasping my hands, I softly exclaimed, "Would to God I had some friend or brother to defend me from such insolence!"—Then turning to the vile wretch who stood before me, "Go on, Sir."

"Well,

“ Well, Madam, I told them, as my sister
“ seemed to be recovering, I would take her home :
“ then offering them something for their trouble,
“ which they refused to accept, I ordered a coach,
“ and putting you into it, drove to this place,
“ where I soon had the pleasure of seeing you reco-
“ ver. The rest you know.”

“ And pray, Sir, what excuse have you to offer
“ for this singular behaviour ?

“ Your lovely Self ! I have already told you how
“ much I adore you.”

He then advanced towards me, for we were both standing, and offered to take me in his arms ; but by a sudden spring I got from him, and taking out a small knife which I had by chance put into my pocket the day before, opened it, and assured him that if he attempted to take any improper liberty, I would repel the insult by violence. He tried to force the weapon from me ; but fear giving me strength, his attempt proved fruitless. Falling on his knees, he next begged me to throw the knife away, assuring me that no harm should befall me ; but in vain : I kept steady to my purpose, and told him, if he entertained any hopes of forgiveness, immediately to send for a coach, and let me be conveyed home. He persisted a long time in refusing me ; but finding me resolute in still keeping my weapon for my defence, he at last said, “ You don’t know, Miss Meadows, what hour it is : ’tis past six in the morning ; no-body will be stirring.”

“ O ! yes, the servants will,” cried I.

“ But consider, what will they think to see you
“ come home at such a time in the morning ? Why,
“ they can see you have not been in bed all night.”

“ I little care what all the world thinks, provided
“ I am out of your hands and this house.”

“ Cruel

"Cruel girl!" replied he; but going to the door and opening it, he ordered a coach to be called. Before he could shut it again, fearing some new treachery, I pushed by him, and before he had power to prevent me, was in the street. I flew up it, and by chance meeting with a chair, ordered the men to carry me to Berkley-Square. This they complied with, tho' they stared at me with the utmost curiosity; as well they might; for my being in a full-dress (and that not a little disordered), my hair dishevelled, without even a cloak, and unattended at that time, was sufficient to excite their astonishment: however, they carried me very safely to Lady Caroline's house. I gave them half-a-guinea for their trouble, and telling the servants to let me know as soon as their Lady was stirring, hastened to my own apartment, where I have wrote thus far. But I hear Lady Caroline; adieu, therefore, for the present.

I have again resumed my pen; for instead of her ladyship, 'twas her maid, who told me she was not yet stirring; I therefore sat down to read what I have wrote.

I scarcely know what to think of Lady Caroline's behaviour! When I came in, I had neither thought nor inclination to take any rest; therefore sat down to give my dear Julia an account of the shocking scene. As to Lady Caroline, I know she is gay to excess; that she pursues pleasure wherever she can find it; nay, even vice, provided it goes under the name of being *fashionable*, is not rejected by her. Can such a one as the lady I have above described be a fit companion for your *Jemima*? No, no, my *Julia*; too sensible am I of the contrary. Yet whither can I fly? I have neither friends nor relations to apply to; and business I am incapable of. If I was inclined to seek another lady, might I not meet with a second Lady Caroline? She has always hitherto treated

treated me rather as a friend than an humble companion, though I think I have lately observed an alteration in her behaviour towards me. I attributed it at first to a little female pique that Sir John Dudley should leave her for me; but when she found that I had likewise rejected him, her former good-humour returned.

I now find myself too fatigued to proceed any farther, and must therefore conclude, but will write again by next post.

Adieu, my dear Julia!

Yours sincerely,
JEMIMA MEADOWS.

LETTER X.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

IN CONTINUATION.

I HAD just sealed my last letter, when Lady Caroline entered the room. She enquired with the utmost eagerness after my health, and the reason of my looking so ill: "But, good God! (added she) you look, my dear, as if you had not been in bed all night. For Heaven's sake, what's the matter?"

This kind speech somewhat relieved the anxiety of my mind, by contributing to remove the suspicion I entertained of Lady Caroline being privy to Sir William Meredith's villainous scheme. "No, my Lady, (answered I) I have not indeed!"

"Poor thing! The people in the house where I left you promised to have you put to bed directly."

I then related what I have told you in my former letter. She appeared amazed, and exclaimed, "Heavens! could I have thought Sir William
" would

" would have dared to take any improper liberties,
 " I never would have left you in his care. Besides,
 " as he pretended to be so violently in love with
 " you, I could not think of any danger in putting
 " you under his protection."

" You say true, my Lady; but there are few
 " men who will marry a girl with no fortune, if she
 " can be obtained on other terms."

" I am sure he told me he should be very proud
 " to have you for a wife; though, to be sure, he
 " did say your having so small a fortune was a
 " great obstacle, as his estate was not large."

" It would be much more expensive (returned I)
 " to support a mistress than a wife."

" Well, well, my dear, when he finds you are
 " not to be had on other terms, depend upon it you
 " will be *Lady Meredith* at last."

" No, my Lady, (cried I, with an indignation
 " I could not suppress) the man who dares think he
 " could obtain me on the *terms* Sir William did,
 " shall never be my husband; for, though a poor
 " friendless girl, I shall ever detest the man who
 " could offer me such an affront."

Her Ladyship made no reply; but breakfast being over, begged me to go to bed, and try to take some rest. A servant coming to inform her there was company, she withdrew. I went to bed, and found myself unable to get up again the whole day. Lady Caroline came in to ask me how I did, when she went to dress; but finding me very much indisposed, she thought it necessary to send for Dr. Watson, who pronounced me in a high fever. In a week's time, however, my disorder entirely left me, and I was able to see company as usual.

One day, as I was preparing to dress for dinner, Lady Caroline entering my apartment, said,
 " Well, my dear, I am come with a petition from
 " one

“ one of your admirers ; which of them do you think
“ it is ?”

“ Indeed, my Lady, I am sorry you should take
“ so much trouble, for I don’t know one of my ad-
“ mirers (as your Ladyship is pleased to call them)
“ to whom at present I am the least inclined to grant
“ any request. But pray who is he ?”

“ Why, suppose, now, I was to tell you his
“ name, would you——”

“ There is only one your Ladyship can mention
“ (said I, interrupting her) who would be disagree-
“ able to me.”

“ Well, but, my dear, it is no other than Sir
“ William Meredith who has entreated me to peti-
“ tion for your forgiveness, as likewise for your hand
“ at the altar.”

“ I thought, Madam, (replied I, colouring) that
“ I had given my opinion on that subject already.
“ Of my forgiveness your Ladyship may assure him;
“ but my hand he must never expect.”

“ Indeed, my dear, you speak too hastily. Only
“ consider, an alliance with such a man would be
“ greatly to your advantage ; and you can’t expect
“ such an offer every day.”

“ No, my Lady, I neither expect nor desire it ;
“ for at present I have no inclination to change my
“ name : I should therefore be highly obliged by
“ your Ladyship’s never mentioning Sir William to
“ me again.”

“ Well, child, but you can’t possibly avoid see-
“ ing him now and then, as you know he is very
“ often here.”

“ Your Ladyship certainly has a right to see
“ whom you please in your own house ; but I have
“ no occasion to be in the room, except when you
“ particularly desire it.”

“ Then

“ Then I am sure all the world will observe it ;
 “ and as every one will be supposing a reason, with-
 “ out guessing the right, you will become the com-
 “ mon talk of the Town.”

“ Dear Madam, believe me, Jemima Meadows
 “ is too insignificant a being for the world to trouble
 “ themselves about. But pray, Madam, does Sir
 “ William dine here to-day?”

“ Yes indeed, does he ; therefore you must see
 “ him, or go without your dinner ; for I vow
 “ (added she laughing) you shall have none else.”
 So saying, she hastily quitted the room, giving me
 no time to answer.

I was determined not to appear till the dinner-
 bell rung, not doubting but there was more com-
 pany. I was, however, disappointed ; for on en-
 tering the room, I found only Lady Caroline and
 Sir William, who arose at my entrance, and coming
 towards me would have taken my hand ; but I
 made a slight curtsy and took my seat. We talked
 upon general subjects during dinner, though I
 avoided speaking to him as much as possible. When
 dinner was over, and the servants were withdrawn,
 I arose to quit the room ; but Sir William starting
 up, and taking hold of my hand, said, “ You
 “ must not leave us yet.”—Then turning to Lady
 Caroline, whilst he detained my hand, “ Plead for
 “ me, my Lady ; plead for me, I entreat you.”

“ I have done all I can for you, I assure you,
 “ Sir William.”—So saying, she abruptly left the
 room.

This alarming me, I exclaimed, “ How dare
 “ you, Sir William, after what has passed, detain
 “ me thus ?”

“ Promise to forgive me (returned he), and I will
 “ strive to comply with your commands, be they
 “ what they will.”

As he said this he let go my hand.

“ I forgive you, then, on this condition, Sir: that you never in future solicit my company, but do all in your power to avoid me.”

“ Cruel task ! (cried he) but you shall be obeyed. Yet tell me, must I never hope to have the happiness of calling you Lady Meredith ?”

“ Never !” cried I; and hastily leaving the room, went to my own, apartment where I remained till tea-time.

As I was going down to the drawing-room, which I was told was full of company, I was met by Sir John Dudley and Mr. Darcy, who, each seizing a hand, complimented me on my returning health, and conducted me to the room between them, where many other gentlemen likewise paid their respects to me. As to the ladies to whom I paid my compliments, some returned my civilities with a nod; others took no notice at all of me, thinking, I suppose, the humble companion of Lady Caroline Benson not worthy of their attention. Thus in a manner am I forced to listen to the men, who never fail to surround me at home or abroad. 'Tis rather singular that they should take so much notice of a girl whose birth and connections are unknown to them, as Sir William said. There is one lady, however, who visits Lady Caroline, that honours me with a great share of her attention. This is no less a personage than Lady Clara Fitzgerald. Her father, who is an Irish Earl, (for she has lost her mother) leaves her entirely to herself. She is very handsome, about twenty, and has a very large fortune at her own disposal. Yet though this Lady honours me with so much of her attention and friendship (for she vows she has not a friend upon earth whom she likes so well) I cannot admire her. She is so very volatile, so fond of pleasure, as well as so very bold and free
in

in her manner towards the men, that I find it impossible to esteem her.

Well, my dear, I think I have now written you all the news I can, and in return hope to have a long letter from my Julia.—How is your father and Miss Walpole? I long to hear about her.—Heigh-ho!—Your *Jemima* has not forgot her promise of sending you her history; but indeed, my dear, I defer it as long as possible, from the regret I feel at the remembrance of my past life; brought up to splendor and affluence, now reduced to dependence and obscurity! But no more of this: I will banish the idea.

Yours sincerely,

JEMIMA MEADOWS.

LETTER XI.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

Wimpole Street.

HERE am I, Ned, just arrived in London, that dear seat of pleasure, festivity, and joy! after having safely landed my father, mother, sister, and aunt, at their lodgings, I proceeded myself to Wimpole-Street, where I was received by Sir Walter and Lady Warren with great civility, and where a long, long history of your Worship's adventures in Yorkshire is impatiently expected by

Yours sincerely,

HENRY BELVILLE.

LETTER XII.

Captain Hillgrove to Colonel Belville.

Dear Harry,

Burton-Hall.

THE pleasure I felt from your last letter received no little alloy from seeing it dated *Wimpole-Street*. I suppose your wonder will be ex-

cited at this declaration ; but indeed, my friend, I would rather you were lodged in any other house than that of Sir Walter Warren. As both he and his lady are known to be professed gamesters, there may be some danger, perhaps of their drawing you in to follow their example : I would therefore advise you by all means to provide another lodging for yourself. I beg you will take my advice, and let me know (by the return of the post) your address.—I will now proceed to give you the reason for my taking this journey into Yorkshire.

I believe you have heard me speak of Sir Charles Burton having press'd me very often to spend a summer with him at Burton-Hall, but I never had it in my power. Sir Charles having some business in London, we accidentally met, when he again insisted on my accompanying him to this place, where he told me he had a large party ; and, 'faith so there is ; for there are no less than sixteen of us, with his own family. In this large society, however, (would you believe it ?) there are only three unmarried ladies. The first I shall mention is Miss Burton, Sir Charles's daughter, who is about seventeen, a pretty brown girl enough, and full of spirit. The other two are a Miss Lovell and a Miss Dunmore. The former is very giddy, and vain of her person, though that is nothing extraordinary. The latter is by far the prettiest of the three, and seems to be about eighteen. Her face is what you may call handsome, though not regularly beautiful ; her eyes are dark, though her complexion is fair ; add to these a small mouth, a good set of teeth, with a very delicate form, and you have the picture of Miss Mary Dunmore. Her conversation is lively, though not bold : in short, take her all together, she is a very pleasing girl.

Our time is spent very agreeably. We breakfast at ten ; after which, if the weather permits, those who

Lady JEMIMA GUZMAN. 27

who chuse it ride out, some on horseback, others in carriages. In wet weather we pass our mornings with music and singing; or, if the ladies are inclined to work, the gentlemen either read or chat to them, which ever is the most agreeable. Thus we amuse ourselves till three o'clock, when we retire to dress, as we dine at four. In the evening, either dancing, music, or cards, fills up our time till eleven, when supper is ready; and at twelve, or half after, we all retire to rest.

I have promised to stay here six weeks, only two of which are expired. The family, indeed, threaten that I shall not leave them till after Christmas; but I have no intention at present of protracting my visit beyond the first mentioned period. I shall conclude my letter with once more requesting you to change your habitation as soon as possible, and thereby equally please and oblige

Your sincere friend,

EDWARD HILLGROVE.

LETTER XIII.

Miss Belville to Miss Herbert.

My dear Lucy,

IN my letter of last night * I told you I was going to pay a visit to Lady Caroline Benson in the morning. I went accordingly, about twelve o'clock, and, on sending in my name, was immediately admitted. On entering the parlour, I was surprised to find her Ladyship with Miss Meadows and two gentlemen at breakfast. She flew to me, at the same time exclaiming, "Heavens! my dear Miss Belville, how are you? How long have you been in town? When did you arrive?"

B 2

When

* This Letter does not appear.

When I had answered her questions, I spoke to Miss Meadows, and, curtsying to the gentlemen, took my seat.

"Have you breakfasted, my dear?"

"Yes, hours ago."

"Ay, you a'n't used to the Town hours yet, my dear Matilda. But who are you come with?"

"With my father and mother."

"And is not your brother come too?"

"Certainly."

"O lud! then I hope I shall see him."

"I hope so (returned I, smiling), unless your Ladyship forgets me here, as you did in the country."

"How can you be so unkind (replied she, blushing) to think I had forgot you? I hope you don't think so in reality."

I was just going to reply, when Lady Clara Fitzgerald was announced. After her Ladyship was seated, a more general conversation took place, in which the Gentlemen and Miss Meadows, who had hitherto been silent, bore a part. Lady Caroline asked if I had been to the Opera. "To the Opera!" (exclaimed I) and only came to town last night!" "O lud! that is true."—The company laughed, the two Gentlemen rose to take their leave, and I soon after did the same.

Lady Caroline begged the favour of mine and my brother's company to a rout in the evening. I promised for myself; "but as to my brother (added I) I cannot answer for him."—"O do bring him," (cried she, as I took my leave) for I long to see him." I smiled, and told her I would if I could.

When I got home, I told Henry my message: he readily consented to accompany me, and soon afterwards left us, promising to call in the evening to conduct me to Lady Caroline's. But I must now bid you adieu, to prepare for my visit.

M. BELVILLE.
LETTER

LETTER XIV.

Miss Walpole to Miss Dunscombe.

The Cottage.

I THINK I may now venture to tell my dear Mary that I am content. My little cottage has every requisite to make it agreeable; for though the time of the year is unseasonable for walking, yet I have so many other avocations, that I don't feel the loss of my usual exercise; and the agreeable conversation of my new acquaintance Miss Thornton, renders my situation quite enchanting.

I will tell you how I pass my time. I commonly rise about eight o'clock, when, after being dressed, I go and feed my poultry; then I look after my birds, to see they are properly cleaned, have a little talk with my parrot, give some fresh nuts to my squirrel, and, calling my little dog Pompey, sit down to breakfast, which is generally about ten. Reading, drawing, and music, fill up my time till three, when dinner is ready: after that, if the weather permits, I walk to all the little cottages in my neighbourhood, and to those objects I think worthy of my charity I give, as far as my little fortune will permit me; come home at six, drink tea, go to work, and about ten retire to bed.

Now, indeed, my way of life is a little varied, as Miss Thornton and her father either visit me, or I go to spend the afternoon with them, when the old gentleman reads or chats to us while we work, which makes the time pass much quicker: as to other company, I always avoid it. Indeed the Thorntons are extremely obliging me, and never tease me with questions. I have told them I wish to live retired, and they are so polite as never to introduce any strangers to me.

I am glad my dear Mary has met with such an agreeable party at Sir Charles Burton's; but take care, my friend: the partial character you give of Captain Hillgrove too plainly shews your heart is touched. He may be deserving, and he may not; but whatever you do, my sweet girl, don't give him your heart before you are sure you have his in return. Remember you are very young; therefore consider well, before you place your esteem upon a man of whom you know so little. I need not tell you, my dear, I have too sensibly experienced the treachery of the men; and may therefore be allowed to offer my advice, which I hope you will accept as it is meant, proceeding solely from my love for you. I beg you will continue to write to me with the same ease and freedom you have hitherto done, or you will make me think I have offended you by my advice, than which nothing is or can be more foreign to the heart of

Your sincere friend,

EMMA WALPOLE.

LETTER XV.

Miss Belville to Miss Herbert.

My dear Lucy,

A GREEABLY to my promise, I shall continue my journal.

On Wednesday evening my brother and I proceeded to Lady Caroline Benson's. On our arrival at her Ladyship's house, we were conducted to the drawing-room, where we found Lady Caroline with the same company I had seen in the morning. I presented my brother to her, as likewise her Ladyship to him; after which we took our seats. For my part, knowing very little of the *beau monde*, I could

could not say much, as the whole discourse seemed to turn upon dress, public places, and scandal. As to my brother, he seemed wholly engrossed by the three ladies he saw when he first entered the room, viz. Lady Caroline, Lady Clara Fitzgerald (whom I mentioned to you before) and Miss Meadows. Tea being over, cards were proposed; and these filled up the time till eleven, when the party broke up. Lady Caroline followed, and invited me and my brother to dine with her next day, and accompany her to the Opera in the evening. I accepted her Ladyship's invitation, but my brother answered, he was afraid he was engaged.

As we went home, "Well, Henry, (said I) how do you like my friend Lady Caroline?"

"Why, she is well enough, but is quite the woman of fashion. Pray, who is that companion of her's?"

"You mean Miss Meadows. I know very little of her; only that her Ladyship brought her out of Devonshire with her three years ago."

By this time we had reached home, which prevented any farther discourse on that subject. My brother soon after took his leave, and we retired to our chambers.

The next morning Henry called, and asked me to take a walk in the Park. We had not been there a long time, when we were met by Lady Caroline and Miss Meadows, who joined us; and before we had taken a second turn, Sir John Dudley and Mr. Darcy saluted us. Sir John, who placed himself next me, asked how I liked London? I told him I had been too short a time in it to form any judgment. He said no more, as a gentleman came up to my brother, and welcomed him to town.

Henry presented him to me by the name of Walsingham. He is a very elegant man, but seems rather,

ther melancholy. I told my brother so, who said he had been disappointed in love, he believed; adding, I "would have you guard against him; for he is very "handsome, and may steal your affections before "you are aware; and I believe his heart is too "deeply engaged ever to be recovered." I laughed, and assured him he need not be at all afraid, for I had not yet seen the man who had made any impression upon my heart. By this time we had reached home, when my brother wishing us a good morning, went to his lodgings to dress (for he has left Sir Walter Warren's). About four o'clock he called upon me again, attended me to Lady Caroline's, and afterwards to the Opera.

I cannot say I approve of the Opera much, as the action of the performers seemed quite unnatural, though the singing and music is delightful: in short, I was not at all pleased with it, to the great surprize of my company, which consisted of Lady Caroline Benson, Lady Clara Fitzgerald, and a Miss Spencer, who is on a visit to Lady Caroline. As to Miss Meadows, she excused herself from going, by alledging she had letters to write.

By the way, I don't know what to make of Miss Meadows. I think she is not what she appears to be. I once was inclined to believe she was a relation of Lady Caroline's; then, again, that she was some young lady under misfortune, for she has had an elegant education. She speaks Italian and French perfectly, and plays, sings, and dances, I have been told, admirably; she has, besides all these, every requisite in conversation to charm: in short, all the men seem to adore, and all the women to envy her, except Lady Clara Fitzgerald, who never appears so happy as when near her. I have several times asked Lady Caroline concerning her; but she assures me she knows as little of her as myself:

self: she was told, indeed, by Lady Mary Norton, the lady Miss Meadows formerly lived with (who but is since dead), that she was the daughter of a lady she had formerly known, and was a very deserving young person.

I had almost forgot to tell you I have been twice to the Play, and that I liked it much better than the Opera. To-night I go to the Pantheon; to-morrow to Almack's; so you see, my dear, I lead a very dissipated life: but it is impossible to live otherwise in this town; at least Lady Caroline tells me so, who never misses one place of diversion, and insists always upon my being of the party, though I am inclined to believe it is more for the sake of my brother's company than mine; for when he does not accompany us, (and, by the bye, he has accompanied us very seldom lately), she seems very indifferent to me, and leaves me to be entertained by those who are willing to take that trouble.

My maid has just informed me that it is time to dress; I must therefore conclude in haste, as my Mamma is ready, and we are all to dine at Lady Caroline's.

My brother has just sent to let us know he can't be of the party.

Adieu, my dear Lucy!

And believe me your affectionate
M. BELVILLE.

LETTER XVI.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

ACCORDING to your sage advice, Ned, I have changed my abode, and am settled in very convenient lodgings in Dover-street. As soon as I received your letter, I informed Sir Walter and

his Lady, that as I should make a much longer stay in town than I at first intended, I had taken a lodging. They expressed great concern to part with me, and begged I would see them as often as possible.

Walsingham is in town, but still very melancholy; for he does not seem to have forgot his Emma yet.

I think I mentioned in one of my former letters a Lady Caroline Benson, whom I had never seen, but who was a great friend and favourite of my sister's. As soon as we came to town, Matilda paid her a visit, and brought me an invitation from her Ladyship to accompany my sister to her rout in the evening; and I accordingly went. We found a great number of both sexes assembled, but there were only two of the ladies whom I particularly remarked (for Lady Caroline is not the nymph to charm me); the one, a Lady Clara Fitzgerald; the other, a Miss Meadows. I enquired of Sir John Dudley, whom I have occasionally met there before, who they were. He told me that Lady Clara was the only daughter of the Earl of Baltimore; that when she came of age, which would happen in less than two months, she would be intitled to a fortune of five thousand a-year, left her by her grandfather on her mother's side; and that when her father dies, she will receive a considerable addition of fortune in ready money, as the Earl is so doatingly fond of her Ladyship, that he saves immense sums out of his yearly revenue (which is considerable) on purpose to leave her after his death; his estate (his Lordship having no son) going to a distant branch of the family. I asked what character her Ladyship bore: he smiled, but evaded my question.

I then repeated my enquiries respecting Miss Meadows, when, half suppressing a sigh, he made this reply: "Who that Lady is, Sir, scarcely any one
" knows,

“ knows, except that she is the companion of Lady, “ Caroline Benson, who knows as little of her real “ history as myself. She has had many offers of “ marriage, but has rejected them all. This, “ Sir, (continued he) is all the account I can give “ of either of the ladies.”

I thanked him for his information, and a servant that moment calling us to cards, put an end to our conversation. Either by chance or design, we were all four seated at the same table, viz. Lady Clara Fitzgerald, Miss Meadows, Sir John Dudley, and your Humble Servant; and this fortunately gave me an opportunity as well as leisure to observe both ladies.

Lady Clara is rather below the middle size, of a dark complexion, and black eyes; her nose rather inclined to the Roman; her mouth large, but having a very good set of teeth, and a dimpled chin, it is not so much observed. This is the portrait of Lady Clara, as nearly as I can draw it; but how to describe Miss Meadows I know not. She is considerably taller than her Ladyship; face oval; complexion fair as alabaster; her hair seems to be flaxen, but being disguised by powder, I am not certain; eyes blue; very little colour in her cheek, though a trifle heightens it; mouth small; teeth even, and white as ivory; manners gentle; conversation at once pleasing and instructive; unassuming and polite; a dignity in her carriage which inspires awe and respect: in short, what is to be wished for in woman, I will venture to affirm is to be found in *Jemima Meadows*.

After these warm eulogiums, you may, perhaps, suppose me to be in love with the lady; and I will own to you, Ned, as I have never yet concealed my inmost thoughts from you, that at the first sight of her, I felt sensations in my breast which I never experienced

experienced before. But when I heard her situation in life I took care to eradicate every thought of that kind from my mind; for which purpose, I absented myself from Lady Caroline Benson's several days; and when I was obliged to see her, paid all my attentions to Lady Clara, who, vanity apart, I believe, has no aversion to me. Had I a fortune to support her, no woman should share it, but the lovely *Jemima*: as I have not, I must try to forget her.

And having thus disclosed my secret to you, I shall try to surmount a passion which I foresee will be productive of no happiness to

Yours, &c.

HENRY BELVILLE.

LETTER XVII.

Lady Clara Fitzgerald to Miss Watson.

Hill-Street.

WELL, Bab, would you believe it? I am over-head-and-ears in love with such a man, you have never seen his fellow! To give you a description of him is impossible!—His name is *Henry Belville*; a charming one, is it not? I met him at Lady Caroline Benson's, and had the pleasure of seeing the sweet fellow attached to me the whole evening, as he scarcely spoke to any one except *Miss Meadows* and myself. You know who I mean; Lady Caroline's companion. Poor thing! I really pity that girl, to live so in dependence. O Bab! if I could have the charming *Belville* for a husband, how happy your Clara would be! He has a father, mother, sister, and maiden aunt. With these old fashioned folks has the angelic *Harry* passed his summer, and is now come to town with them; however, the old folks, as I call Mrs. and Mr.

Mr. Belville and the old aunt, with their daughter, set off for the country again very soon, and leave him behind, when I hope to get him all to myself. I have been several times at his father's, but don't always see the son, as he lives in different lodgings. I am going this evening with Lady Caroline and Miss Meadows, and must therefore prepare to dress, but will not finish my letter till I return from my visit. Adieu!

Eleven o'Clock.

I am come home very much out of humour.—I told you I was going to see Mrs. Belville.—I looked round for Henry, which I could easily do, as there was a very small party, but was disappointed, as he was no where to be found.

Miss Meadows did not go, having complained of the head-ach, and therefore requested to be excused. Upon asking Miss Belville after her brother, she said, they had not seen him all day, but that they expected him every moment. I had waited very patiently near an hour, when I sat down to cards with Lady Eliza Mellish, Sir John Dudley, and Mr. Walsingham; but had not played long before the charming Harry entered. It was with great difficulty I suppressed my feelings when I saw him, but I could not help exclaiming, "Dear Mr. Belville, how do you do?" He bow'd, but look'd very serious; at the same time returning my compliment. Mr. Walsingham offered him his seat, which he declined, but stood and look'd on for some time without speaking. At last, by way of saying something, I verily believe, "Where's Miss Meadows, my Lady?"—"She is indisposed with an head-ach, and desires to be excused." He sighed, but did not seem to know what I said, and was again silent:

silent: then suddenly bowing in particular to me, and to the rest of the company in general, he left the room, and we saw no more of him the remainder of the evening.

At ten, Lady Caroline and I took our leave. In our way home all our discourse run upon the charming Belville, as her Ladyship thinks herself as much in love with him as I am; but that's impossible. I put her down in Berkley-square, then proceeded home myself, and have sat down to give you this account; but as I now grow very sleepy must bid you adieu.

Yours, &c.

CLARA FITZGERALD.

LETTER XVIII.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

My dear Julia,

I Received your kind letter yesterday, which expresses your fears for my health. It is not illness, however, which has prevented my writing, but a want of inclination to let you know what has passed in my heart lately. After this preamble, you will, perhaps, easily guess the real state of it. Know, then, it is that sly urchin Cupid which had nearly made this chasm in our friendship; however, thro' incessant prayers to the little God, I have at last prevailed on him to draw some of his arrows out of my breast; and I have now the pleasure to inform you that he has scarcely left one remaining.

Seriously, my dear, I have been in great danger. I believe you have heard me speak of a Miss Belville, an intimate acquaintance of Lady Caroline Benson. This young lady came to town lately with her father, mother, aunt, and brother. Soon after her arrival, she paid a visit to Lady Caroline. On her

her Ladyship asking if young Mr. Belville was in town, his sister replied in the affirmative; when she begged the favour of her's and her brother's company to a rout in the evening; at the same time adding, she wished very much to see him, as she had never enjoyed that pleasure. Accordingly, they came. It being rather early, there were only Lady Caroline, Lady Clara Fitzgerald, Sir John Dudley, and myself, present. All eyes were fixed on them, or rather *him*, when they entered; but never, Julia, did I behold such a man! I thought Dudley handsome, till I saw the divine Harry Belville. He is tall, without being awkwardly so; size proportionably to height; fair complexion, though not effeminate; dark blue eyes, and good teeth; his conversation both entertaining and polite; in short, it is impossible to see or hear him without endangering your heart.

Lady Caroline and Lady Clara are both dying for him: each hopes to be the happy woman, yet neither is certain which is preferred. To speak my thoughts freely, Lady Clara seems to have the preference; though it is difficult to decide, as he treats every woman, nay, even myself, spite of my humiliating situation, with the greatest respect and the most easy familiarity. Indeed, I have been foolish enough to think sometimes that he has preferred my company to that of any other woman in the room; but I soon banished the vain idea from my heart, and mustering up all my resolution, determined to drive him from my thoughts.

To accomplish this, I have confined myself to my apartment, studiously avoiding every party where I thought I should meet him. This I have effected by pleading head-achs, colds, &c. which were in some measure true; or, when that failed, by pretending that I had letters to write; or a want of inclination

inclination to stir out sufficed, as Lady Caroline has always company enough to attend her. By this mode of proceeding I have in a great measure restored my heart to its former serenity; and though Belville has been in the house almost every day, I have not set my eyes on him during the last fortnight.

Yesterday I was visited by Lady Clara Fitzgerald, who almost in the same breath she enquired after my health, exclaimed, "Lord, my dear! what do you think? I have not seen Mr. Belville these two days."

"What a shocking thing!" replied I, smiling.

"Is it not very odd?" returned she. "And what is more, his sister has seen as little of him as we have."

"Perhaps he has some favourite lady who engrosses his time."

"Good Heavens! (cried she) if I thought he had, how I should despise him, as she must be some low-born wench, or she would have been heard of: besides, his own family must know it."

"Dear my Lady, has Mr. Belville ever made a declaration of love to you?"

"Lord! No, my dear (replied she, colouring) but then he has always behaved *civilly* to me."

"Hum! (returned I) I thought Mr. Belville behaved *civil* to every woman."

"Well, but, my dear Jemima, to tell you a secret, I am absolutely dying of love for this sweet fellow; and don't you think it will be extremely hard that a lady of my birth and fortune, to say nothing of my person" (at the same time looking in a large glass which she stood before) "should be refused by Belville?"

"Pray,

“ Pray, my Lady, have you ever informed this
 “ said Mr. Belville how much your Ladyship is in
 love with him ?”

“ O lud! my dear, I would not do such a thing for
 “ the world ; for if I were to make it known to a
 “ man of his principles, it would shock him so much,
 “ that he would have nothing more to say to me.”

Here she was interrupted by the entrance of company, when the conversation took a general turn, and I seized the first opportunity of retiring to my own apartment, where I determined to write my Julia this account. Though it is more than three weeks since you received a line from me, I do assure you I have not been idle, having taken that opportunity of writing the History so long desired by my friend. Yes, my dear Julia, I shall send by to-morrow's post three packets, which contain the eventful story of your *Jemima*. From these you will find, that neither riches nor high birth can insure happiness. No, my Julia, no. Born to every thing splendid and affluent, what am I now ? A servile dependent on the bounty of others. Though, if my story were known, the world might censure my conduct, I cannot condemn myself. I thoroughly considered my situation before I put my plan in execution ; nor did I adopt it then, till driven to extremities.

I will only add one circumstance more ; which is, that you will find by taking off the cover of the first packet, I have no claim to the name of *Meadows*, which is only assumed from necessity ; and when my Julia has read the whole with attention, I shall hope to be favoured with her opinion of every incident of my life, with the same friendly freedom with which she has always hitherto treated her

JEMIMA.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

Captain Hillgrove to Colonel Belville.

My dear friend,

FOR Heaven's sake, what are you doing? A whole fortnight, and not one line! If it is illness, why not employ the pen of some of your friends? Yesterday I had formed a scheme of writing to your father, to enquire after your health; but by the arrival of Capt. Wilson, from London, last night, I learned that he had left you perfectly well only two days before. What, then, can occasion your silence? I am not conscious of having written any thing in my last to incur your displeasure. It is true, I recommended to you to banish the image of Miss Meadows from your mind, and to turn your thoughts to Lady Clara, as she was rich and of high birth: for too certain am I, that your father will never consent to your being united to one without either money or family connexions. Surely, such friendly advice could not offend you, as I only in a manner pursued the system yourself had laid down. Had you not left the house of Sir Walter Warren, I should have suspected him to have drawn you into the commission of the vice I so much dreaded; but I entertain too good an opinion of you to suppose you can be led astray when not under his roof, though I know his artful practices too well. In short, my dear Henry, be it what it may, I beg, on the receipt of this, an immediate answer; and be assured, if you are in want of any assistance which I can render you, you may command every thing in the power of

Your sincere friend,

EDWARD HILLGROVE.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

PACKET THE FIRST.

BY a letter which precedes this, my Julia will be informed of the purport of the following sheets.

THE
HISTORY
OF
LADY JEMIMA GUZMAN.

MY grand-father, who was a Spaniard by birth, and whose name was Guzman, was the only son of the Marquis de Guzman, who was descended from one of the most ancient families in Old Spain. His temper was fiery and impetuous. Having lost his lady at the very moment she gave birth to the young Alphonso, he could never endure him in his sight. This occasioned the child to be brought up under the care of persons who only strove which should please him most; and although his father was and his mother had been rigid Catholics, at the age of sixteen he had not the least idea of that or any other religion. About this period he lost the Marquis his father, scarcely knowing what was meant by that tender name. Though he had not been instructed

structed in the principles of religion, yet in every other particular he had received the best of educations. He possessed both good-sense and good-nature; which, had they been properly cultivated, would have rendered him a useful member of society: unfortunately, however, he was surrounded by parasites and sycophants, who took care to discourage the least mark of liberality to any but themselves. He was taught to believe that it was beneath his dignity to receive a petition from any of his tenants, who were therefore either obliged to submit to their oppressions, or cringe to his attendants to intercede for them. These took care not to tell him the least story of distress, for fear of turning his thoughts on other subjects besides pleasure; or, when pressed by those distressed people to know what answer the Marquis returned, they were told he was informed of their supplications, but had taken little or no notice of them; and by these means, as well as by addicting himself solely to luxury and pleasure, he acquired the character of being equally proud, dissipated, and unfeeling.

Two years had elapsed in this manner, when our young Marquis became acquainted with three English gentlemen, whom he invited to his house: and with whose manners and behaviour he quickly grew so much delighted, that he entirely forsook the company of his former acquaintance, and studied with the greatest diligence the manners of his new favourites. This alteration in his conduct presented a melancholy prospect to the wretches he had before honoured with his friendship. They now saw that the fabric, which, in their own opinions, they had so securely built for themselves, was tottering to destruction; and soon after they found it totally demolished, when the Marquis informed them he had determined to visit England.

The

The plan was no sooner conceived than executed. Leaving therefore the care of his affairs to his steward, he soon after set out for England, where he arrived in safety with his three companions, whose characters it may not be improper or unnecessary that we should delineate.

The first was the Earl of Newport, eldest son of the Duke of Bradford. This young nobleman possessed many good qualities; in short, his only fault was a too great propensity to the fair-sex.

The second of these gentlemen was the Honourable Mr. Ward, second son to Lord Birmingham, who was distinguished by all the failings, without possessing any of the virtues, of Lord Newport. To these he likewise added an immoderate rage for gaming, as well as for every other fashionable folly and excess.

Mr. Lumley (the last of the triumvirate) was the son of Sir George Lumley, and bore a most excellent character both in public and private life. Though his annual income was not large, owing to his father having a numerous family, he had always something to spare for the cries of indigence and distress. From the first time of his being introduced to the Marquis, Mr. Lumley had conceived a real friendship for him; and when Alphonso informed him of his intentions of returning to England with himself, Lord Newport, and Mr. Ward, he received the news with the greatest pleasure; at the same time determining to preserve him as much as possible from the vices of his companions.

On the arrival of the four friends in England, it being the month of June, there was little or no company in London; however, each of his companions, after Alphonso had seen every thing that was worthy of observation, endeavoured to engage him in their own favourite pursuits. Lord Newport introduced

introduced him to the ladies; Mr. Ward drew him to the gaming-table; while Mr. Lumley wished to carry him to his father's country-seat in Wiltshire; and the Marquis, willing to oblige all his friends, readily fell into every scheme which each of them severally proposed to him.

Having no aversion to the fair-sex, he quickly, under the auspices of Lord Newport, formed several female connections; with which, however, as they were confined chiefly to those unfortunate females who make a traffick of their charms, he soon became disgusted: he therefore next determined to pursue Mr. Ward's plan, and for a whole week never appeared so happy as when at the gaming-table. At the end of that week, however, his reason began to reassume her reign, and he thus expostulated with himself:

“ What profit or pleasure have I experienced in
“ the life I have hitherto led? My two friends have
“ each recommended their own plans for my pleasure and amusement; and I have been miserably
“ disappointed in both. In the first I found no
“ real or permanent satisfaction; and what pleasure have I derived from the second? I have
“ seated myself at a table with my pockets full of
“ money, and never risen from it till they were
“ empty: rioting and drunkenness succeeded, and I
“ have returned home either incapable of knowing
“ what was past; or if on the contrary a little reason remained, it served only to condemn my past
“ conduct. If these are the only pleasures London
“ can afford, I will return again to my own country: however, I will first try my friend Lumley's
“ scheme, and accompany him to his father's seat,
“ where if I should again experience a disappointment, I will immediately bid adieu to England.”

After

After having thus reasoned with himself, Alphonso dispatched a servant for Mr. Lumley, who instantly obeyed the summons, and with great joy heard the Marquis tell him, that if he was willing to retire to the country to see his friends, he was ready to attend him. Lumley, charmed with the proposal, hurried away to give orders for their intended journey; and the next morning the Marquis and Mr. Lumley set off for Lumley-Hall.

While the two friends are on their journey, it may not be improper, perhaps, to give some description of the Lumley family.

Sir George Lumley was the only son of Sir John Lumley, who had been dead about ten years, leaving his son in the possession of a good estate, an amiable wife, and an excellent character. With these requisites he could scarcely fail of being happy. His children, at his father's death, consisted of Mr. George Lumley, the young gentleman already mentioned, and two daughters.

With an agreeable person and figure, Miss Lumley possessed a well cultivated understanding; the younger, however, was by far the most accomplished of the two sisters. Her person was lovely; and in her mind and manners centered every virtue and grace which could render her an object of universal love and esteem. This young lady, whose name was Jemima, was at this time about eighteen, and two years younger than her sister Almeria.

As soon as Mr. Lumley was apprized of the Marquis's intention, he instantly wrote to his father, who in consequence made every preparation to receive them. On the first sight of the lovely Jemima, the Marquis stood motionless with surprize and admiration. Never before had he beheld a form so enchanting, or a face so expressive of every grace. On her part, she was no less agitated than the Marquis;

quis; in short, each felt for the other sensations which they had never experienced before.

How different, now, was Alphonso's situation! Here the time never hung heavy on his hands, his amusements being equally rational and instructive. Thus agreeably had passed the summer, when Sir George and Lady Lumley began to talk of going to London, at a time when neither the Marquis, Miss Jemima, nor her brother, even suspected the season to be so far advanced: but as their father and mother had only to command to be obeyed, every thing was soon in readiness for their departure.

The Marquis, however, quitted Wiltshire with the deepest regret. Though he was sensible he should see Jemima every day as usual, yet he was apprehensive it would be only in a crowd, as the charms of his lovely mistress attracted swarms of admirers wherever she was to be seen. Alphonso, therefore, dreading to lose the only woman he ever before approved, after mature deliberation, determined to make her a tender of his hand and fortune.

After forming this resolution, he immediately ordered his carriage and drove to Hanover-Square, where Sir George Lumley lived; and luckily finding that gentleman at home, he formally solicited his consent to an union with his daughter Jemima. The fond father, ever ready to promote what he thought would increase the happiness of his children, thanked the Marquis in the most respectful terms for the honour he intended his family, and immediately communicated the proposal to his daughter. Sir George found little difficulty in persuading her to accept of Alphonso's offer, and every necessary preliminary being soon after settled, in less than two months Jemima Lumley became Marchioness de Guzman, and young Lumley had the happiness of adding the endearing title of *brother* to that of *friend*;

friend; for as such he had always considered the Marquis, from their first acquaintance.

Twelve months did not elapse before the Marchioness was delivered of a son, to the great joy of the Marquis and all the family. They continued to live in the most perfect tranquility about three years, without any extraordinary event happening, except the birth of another son, and the marriages of the Marchioness's brother and sister; but in the fourth year they sustained a very affecting loss, by the deaths of Sir George and Lady Lumley.

About this time the Marquis received a letter from Spain, informing him that his steward was dangerously ill, and requesting either that he would return himself, or appoint an agent to receive the accounts. Alphonso not being prepared to entrust any person with such an important commission, determined, with his Lady's consent, to undertake the journey himself. The sole objection offered to this scheme by the Marchioness was the difficulty and hazard of removing her children. Lord Alphonso, the eldest, was now nearly five years old, and of a strong, healthy, but violent disposition. Lord George, who was three years younger than his brother, possessed a delicate form, and apparently a mild, placid disposition: on him alone, therefore, rested the tender anxiety of the Marchioness. Sir George and Lady Lumley having no children, and being apprized of the Marquis's intended journey, requested that Lord George might be entrusted to their care. With some hesitation the fond mother at length consented to leave her little darling behind, though not without shedding many tears at parting.

After a very pleasant voyage, the Marquis, Marchioness, and Lord Alphonso, arrived safely in Spain, where the Marquis had the pleasure to find his steward still living, and capable of rendering an equally just and satisfactory state of his affairs, though he expired in a very short time afterwards, extremely regretted by his master.

The Marquis soon found himself surrounded by his former favourites; but, as they had foreseen, they found his manners and affections had undergone a total revolution. He was polite to all, but distinguished none. In short, every department of his family now wore a different aspect; while his poor tenants were clothed, and scarcely sued for charity before it was granted. In the mean time his former tutors solicited the honour of being entrusted with the similar charge of his son; this, however, was refused, the Marquis alledging in excuse, that he had brought proper tutors from England; which was indeed true: for besides their chaplain, a young English gentleman had been retained in that station till the young Lord was of proper age to go to Oxford or Cambridge.

To the infinite chagrin of the Marchioness, however, she observed, that as Alphonso grew up he discovered an overbearing, imperious temper. In vain did this amiable Lady endeavour to correct his foibles by gentle means. At length she determined to commit him solely to the management of his preceptors, as he was now upwards of twelve years of age.

During all this time she had not once seen her youngest son: she, therefore, requested the Marquis to indulge her with the pleasure of seeing him, who accordingly agreed to invite Sir George and Lady Lumley to bring him over. The letters were immediately dispatched, and answered as quickly, containing a promise of being there as soon as possible.

But I now grow tired with transcribing. I must, therefore, refer my Julia to the second packet.

Yours,

JEMIMA.

PAQUET

PACQUET THE SECOND.

LADY JEMIMA GUZMAN'S
HISTORY CONTINUED.

ON the second of May, Sir George and Lady Lumley arrived in Spain with their young charge, Lord George Guzman. To describe the joy of the fond mother, or the no less fond father, at the sight of their darling son, is impossible: nor was the little charmer less rejoiced than they; for though his parents had quitted him very young, those with whom he had been placed had taken the greatest pains to impress his mind with proper sentiments of filial duty and affection.

Another twelvemonth passed away, when Sir George and Lady Lumley expressing their wishes to return to England, the Marquis and Marchioness immediately resolved on accompanying them, as the Marquis could then place his sons at the University. Again, therefore, quitting Spain, they set off for England, amidst the prayers of their tenants and servants.

As soon as they arrived in London, every thing was prepared for the departure of the two young lords for the University of Cambridge, whither they were accompanied by the Marquis himself, who, after recommending both to the protection of their tutors, and giving some wholesome advice to each, returned to town.

Lord Alphonso, who was now in his thirteenth year, heartily rejoiced at being thus removed from the immediate controul of his father and mother (for while he was under their eye, he was necessarily constrained to check and suppress his natural temper, which, as has been before mentioned, was proud, haughty, and overbearing) he now, however, thought himself at

liberty to follow the impulse of every passion, and soon distinguished himself by being at the head of every riotous party in the University. In vain did his preceptor remonstrate; in vain did his father and mother expostulate; in vain did his brother solicit. In what a pathetic manner did the amiable Lord George paint to him the consequences of the excesses he daily committed! The only answer he received was, "Did he think he would always be poring over musty books, as he did?" Thus another and another year was passed; and though his allowance from his father was ample, he could scarcely wait from one quarter's payment to another.

Not so was spent the time of his brother. By him the hours not allotted to study were passed in reading, writing, walking, or improving conversation, either with his tutor or some of his fellow-students.

Lord Alphonso had now attained his eighteenth year, when one morning finding himself rather indisposed, from having been intoxicated the preceding evening, he quitted his chamber rather early, and strolled to a little distance from Cambridge, in hopes the fresh air might remove his complaint. As he passed by a small garden, his attention was suddenly arrested by perceiving a lovely young female on a seat reading. After stopping to contemplate her person for some time, he determined to accost her; and accordingly entered at a little gate which stood open. The fair Incognita immediately started up, and was hastily retiring, when Alphonso catching hold of her gown, requested he might not disturb her. On entering into conversation with her, he found her possessed of an understanding far superior to her appearance. After having, with some difficulty, extracted from her, that she was the daughter of a farmer in that neighbourhood, he took his leave; at the same time telling her, that he should not be happy till he saw her again: then kissing her hand, withdrew.

All

All the way home, the farmer's pretty daughter so much engrossed Alphonso's thoughts, that he was resolved to discover the real character of herself and her friends. With this determination he entered the College, where he soon took occasion to enquire of all his fellow-students, whether they knew or had heard of one Farmer Morgan (for that the young woman had informed him was her father's name) carefully avoiding, however, the least mention of their daughter Maria ; but could receive no intelligence respecting him. Thus disappointed, he next determined to make an effort to introduce himself to the father and mother of Maria. For this purpose he set out one morning, unattended, to the little cottage where he had first seen her. He walked about for some time without seeing any body : at length, however observing a young girl at some distance milking, he immediately walked up to her, and finding her singing, said, " You are merry this morning, my pretty lass ! "

" Ah ! (replied the girl) I have little reason to be so." At the same time looking up, and seeing a fine gentleman standing before her, she curtsied, coloured, and said, " I beg pardon, Sir ; but I thought it was our Tom, whom Master generally sends after me to watch."

" Who is your master, my pretty maid ? "

" Farmer Morgan, a'n't please your Honour. He lives at the white house yonder."

" Has he a wife, my dear ? "

" Yes, marry, that he has, and a daughter too."

Aye, thought Alphonso, this is the right clue to lead me to all the intelligence I want.

" Well, but, my dear, is not your mistress good to you ? "

" Good to me, indeed ! Why, she has not said so many kind things to me all the time I've lived wi' her as you have said to me to-day ; and I have liv'd wi' her three year, come next Monday."

“ Indeed ! But what made you live so long with
 “ her, then ?”

“ Because, Sir, good places are hard to be got. Not
 “ that her’s is one ; only young Madam is good to
 “ me sometimes.”

“ Only sometimes !——How is that, how is that,
 “ pretty face ?”

“ Why, because, Sir, she is not always very hap-
 “ py, as old Madam wants her to put herself more in
 “ the mens way, and young Madam don’t like it ;
 “ for I assure you, Sir, she is very honest, though she’s
 “ only a farmer’s daughter. For you must know, Sir,
 “ she’s very handsome ; and her mother tells her she’d
 “ soon get a husband, if she’d shew herself a little
 “ more : for she put her to school, and had her taught
 “ all kinds of fine work, and to sing, and to dance.”

“ Well, my dear,” (replied Alphonso, taking her
 hand, and at the same time putting a guinea into it)
 “ but don’t you think young Madam, as you call her,
 “ has a sweetheart in a corner ?”

The girl now looking at the money, said, “ La, your
 “ Honour ! what is this for ?”

“ Only to buy you a riband, my dear.”

The girl thanked him, and saying it would buy her
 many things besides ribands, put it into her pocket.

“ Why, Sir, as to a sweetheart, I don’t know what
 “ to say. I could tell you something, if I thought
 “ young Madam would not hear of it again.”

His Lordship assuring her there was no fear, the
 girl thus went on :

“ Why, an’ please your Honour, you must know,
 “ that three or four days ago young Madam was
 “ in the garden a long time ’fore breakfast. Both my
 “ master and mistress waited some time for her : at last
 “ old Madam got up to look after her, and just as she
 “ got to the gate, she see’d Maria wth a young gen-
 “ tleman, who seem’d to be talking to her. Madam
 “ stood for some time looking at them : at last she
 see’d

“ see’d him kiss her hand, and walk off. Miss then
 “ turn’d towards the house ; but seeing her mother,
 “ began to be frightened. Old Madam then asked her
 “ who the gentleman was ? And Miss answered that she
 “ didn’t know ; but told her a power of fine things he
 “ had said to her. Old Madam was mortal angry
 “ that she hadn’t ask’d him in ; and desired, the next
 “ time he came, that she would ; but Miss Maria has
 “ seen nothing of him from that day to this, tho’ she
 “ often speaks of him.”

Alphonso having heard sufficient for his purpose, after a few more kind words, took his leave of the girl. He now considered what plan of conduct would be most proper to adopt. He found he should have no difficulty to introduce himself at the farmer’s, and therefore thought it best to return home, that his companions might have no suspicion of his design : besides, he knew likewise, that if his brother should happen to hear of it, he would immediately be alarmed for his honour, as well as for that of the girl ; he determined, therefore, to keep it secret from every one.

Having thus settled this important business, he returned home, and spent the day as usual ; but the next morning set off for the farmer’s, when, to his great joy, he perceived the mother sitting alone at her work in the garden. He stood a few minutes, considering how he should introduce himself. At last, finding she did not perceive him, he thus accosted her :

“ Good morrow to you, Ma’am. You have a pretty spot of ground here.”

“ Yes, Sir,” (return’d Dame Morgan, looking at him, and rising) “ it is a pretty spot enough. Will your Honour please to rest yourself a little ?” All this time she was smoothing her apron ; for she immediately knew Alphonso to be the same gentleman she had seen talking to her daughter.

Alphonso did not hesitate to accept her invitation; and, after a few insignificant questions, said, "Pray, Madam, have not you a daughter?"

"Yes, Sir, (answered she) and not an ugly one neither, though I say it; and so will you when you see her, if you have not already: however, if you will walk in, and drink a glass of my currant wine, you may see her again."

Alphonso did not require much intreaty, but following his conductress was ushered into a small neat parlour, where Maria was sitting at work. As he advanced towards her she arose blushing and trembling, at the same time offering him a seat. He took her hand, and leading her to the chair she had quitted, placed himself by her side: he then entered into conversation with her, in which he found her both lively and entertaining. Two hours passed away in this agreeable manner, till the preparations for dinner reminded him of departing: he therefore arose to take his leave, when Mrs. Morgan entering, begged that the dinner might not frighten him away; "for, Sir, (continued she) "if you will please to sit down with us, we have some very fine beans and bacon." He thanked her, but saying he should not dine for some hours, took his leave.

During a whole week Alphonso visited Maria every day, in which time he became sensible that he must either marry or resign all thoughts of her, as he found, whenever he attempted the least familiarity, she always resented it with the greatest indignation. Besides, tho' Mrs. Morgan wished very much to see her daughter happily married, yet she never would have consented to see her the mistress of a prince. Alphonso, who really loved Maria, sustained a severe conflict between pride and affection. To obtain her as a mistress was impossible, and his pride would not suffer him to think of her as a wife; at least to acknowledge her as such publicly: all his hopes, then, rested

rested on persuading her and her friends to consent to a private marriage.

He accordingly determined to make trial of this scheme, and on hinting it to Maria, to his great joy found her not averse to it. In a subsequent visit, after disclosing his real name and rank in life, he made his proposals more fully known to her father and mother, when Mrs. Morgan, though certain that his parents would never consent to his uniting himself to a farmer's daughter, yet fondly believing Alphonso's love would prove as lasting as it at present appeared to be ardent, consented to the terms he proposed, on condition that he would publicly acknowledge Maria when he came of age. This he readily promised; and every difficulty being thus obviated, a licence procured, as well as a parson who could be relied on, Alphonso one morning arose early, and hastening to the place appointed for the performance of the ceremony, was there met by Maria, with her mother and father, at whose hands he received her.

Another year quickly elapsed, in the course of which Maria was delivered of a son; and it was now that Alphonso first experienced the inconvenience of a private marriage; the allowance he had from his father being too small to support his own extravagance and the necessary expences of a wife and child.

It was soon after this event had taken place, and when Alphonso was only just turned of nineteen, that the Marquis paid a visit to his sons at Cambridge. Pleasure sparkled in the eyes of the fond parent, on seeing his children so much improved. He told them, that he and the Marchioness were preparing for a journey to Spain, and were desirous of being accompanied thither by Alphonso and his brother. Lord George accepted the proposal with the greatest joy; and though Alphonso affected to approve the scheme, yet a secret pang for Maria evidently made him appear to enter into it with reluctance. However, on telling the Marquis that he would make preparations to leave

Cambridge as soon as possible, the former was satisfied, and took his leave.

In the mean time, Alphonso, though distressed to frame some excuse to Maria and her mother for his absence, determined to acquaint them with it; and accordingly set out next morning with a heavy aching heart for the Cottage. The tender Maria perceiving the moment he entered, that his mind laboured under some anxiety, fondly enquired in the gentlest terms the cause of his apparent uneasiness, but received no reply. In vain did she endeavour to sooth him by the caresses of herself and her smiling infant, he still continued sullen and silent: at length he abruptly exclaimed, "Maria, I am going to leave you!"

"Going to leave me, my Lord!" replied Maria, with pallid looks and faltering voice.

"Yes; I am ordered by my father to accompany him to Spain."

"Gracious Heaven! going to Spain, and without acknowledging me for your wife!"

"Why, you know I am not of age yet; and if I should introduce you to my friends in that character before that period arrives, it would prove ruinous both to you and myself."

At this moment Mrs. Morgan entered the room; and amazed to find her daughter in tears, hastily enquired the cause. Poor Maria, unable to make any reply, pointed to Alphonso, who, sensible that the secret must be disclosed, immediately related what had passed between Maria and himself. Mrs. Morgan, however, did not receive the intelligence with the same patient calmness of temper as her daughter had, but upbraided him in the severest terms with his indifference and want of affection to his wife and child; at the same time bitterly lamenting that she had ever consented to their union. In vain did Alphonso attempt to appease her; she insisted so peremptorily and vehemently on his publicly acknowledging Maria for his wife

wife before he left England, that he at last promised to consider of it, and let to them know his determination on the following day.

With this assurance he left them; but returned to Cambridge, fully determined to prepare directly for his journey to London, where he hoped to find every thing ready for the family's setting out immediately for Spain: he accordingly, on his arrival at College, instantly requested his brother to be ready to accompany him the next morning, and then retired to his own apartment.

Though Lord George was rather surprised at his brother's precipitation, he forbore to ask any questions, well knowing that every inquiry would prove vain; and at seven o'clock the next morning, having received a previous message that Alphonso was ready, was on the point of leaving his chamber to attend him, when his servant informed him, that a woman requested to speak to him.

This woman was no other than Mrs. Morgan; who having suspected, had narrowly watched Alphonso; and by that means discovering his intentions, had in consequence hurried thus early to the College, determined to communicate the secret of her daughter's marriage to his brother, and to ask his advice.

Upon her being introduced by the servant, Lord George, though surprised to see a stranger, and that stranger a female too, bowed, requested her to be seated, and to let him know her commands.

Mrs. Morgan, bursting into a flood of tears, was for some time unable to speak; but at last with some difficulty stammered out, "Do you know, Sir, that your brother is married?"

Lord George, thunder-struck at this question, repeated, "My brother married, Madam? Impossible!"

"Indeed he is, Sir, and has been so above this twelvemonth."

"And"

“ And pray, Madam, to whom?”

“ To my daughter, my Lord; and I should not
“ have given your Lordship this trouble, only he
“ talks of quitting England without owning her or
“ her infant.”

“ Infant! Is there a child, then?”

“ Yes, a son.”

Lord George now requested her to let him know the whole of her daughter's story: she accordingly related it with equal plainness and circumstantiality; after which he intreated her to be comforted, promising to do every thing in his power to reconcile the Marquis and Marchioness to Alphonso's marriage. With this assurance Mrs. Morgan took her leave, and Lord George went to join his brother; but, to his great surprize, was told, that Alphonso had set off directly, after leaving word that his brother might follow him. From this circumstance, Lord George became assured of the truth of all that he had heard; and therefore determined, before he took any other measures, to see Alphonso's wife and child. Accordingly, instead of following his brother, he proceeded to the Cottage, and after telling Mrs. Morgan of Alphonso's abrupt departure, requested to see her daughter.

But how painful were the feelings of this amiable young man on beholding the lovely Maria, whose languid form exhibited the image of melancholy and despair! He employed every soothing art to alleviate her sorrow and exhilarate her spirits; and pressing her cherub son to his bosom, promised ever to protect it. He then returned to College, determined to write to his father and mother, and solicit their forgiveness of his brother's imprudent conduct.

Alphonso in the mean time had stopped at the first village on the London road from Cambridge, where he waited in hourly expectation of being joined by his brother; while Lord George, though apprized of his retreat, determined not to visit him till he had received

ceived an answer to the letter he had dispatched to his father.

As the Marquis was in hourly expectation of seeing his sons, he felt no little anxiety for their safety, on breaking open the seal of Lord George's letter: but when he read the contents, rage for some time deprived him of his reason. At length the Marchioness so far appeased him, as to obtain his permission to write to Lord George, and inform him, that though the Marquis was too much offended to see Alphonso at present, he had consented that his wife and child might be brought to London.

With what joy did Lord George receive this affectionate epistle! He instantly flew to the Cottage, and after having read that part of it which interested Maria, desired her to prepare immediately for her journey.

The following morning Lord George, Maria, and her infant son, set off for London; but they were obliged to travel very slowly, as Maria's weak state rendered her totally unable to support any fatigue; and so oppressed was she with fear and apprehension, that she fainted when the chaise stopped at the Marquis's door.

Lord George carried her in his arms from the carriage to the parlour, where he found the Marchioness. This amiable woman used every means in her power to restore Maria to life; and having at last effected it, endeavoured to sooth her sorrows and calm her fears by the most affectionate and endearing expressions.

Lord George now thought it high time to inform his brother of what had passed, and accordingly wrote him a narrative of every transaction; at the same time advising him to come to town, and by throwing himself at his father's feet endeavour to regain his confidence and favour.

This letter being dispatched, the Marchioness next attempted to prepare the Marquis for a visit from Maria. He resisted all her entreaties for some time; but
at

at length the repeated solicitations of herself and her son prevailed upon him to admit of Maria being introduced to him, though he peremptorily refused to see either Alphonso or the child. Before Maria, however, could profit from the Marchioness's affectionate interposition, the anxiety of her feelings had operated so powerfully and fatally on her delicate frame, that she was incapable of leaving her chamber on the day appointed for her interview with the Marquis; and a physician being sent for, pronounced her case to be so dangerous, that it was judged necessary to send an express to hasten Alphonso's journey to London.

On his arrival, he was told that his wife had been given over by her physician. Being conducted to her room by his brother, and approaching the bed, he started at the sight, on beholding the pale, ghastly form: for so rapid had been the progress of her disease, that she resembled a corpse more than a living person.

After gazing on her for some time with looks expressive of the deepest affliction, Alphonso asked her if she did not know him.

"Yes, (returned she) and I am rejoiced you are come, that I may take a last farewell." She then desired Lord George to wait on the Marquis, and endeavour to prevail on him to pardon his son before she died. Lord George immediately complied with her request, and soon after returned with his father to Maria's chamber, where she had the satisfaction of seeing a mutual reconciliation take place between her father and her husband.

She did not, however, long enjoy the pleasure arising from this scene, being soon after seized with fainting-fits, in one of which she expired, after having wished Alphonso every happiness in a future marriage with some amiable woman suitable to his rank in life, and earnestly recommended her infant son (whom she wished for that reason to be brought up in ignorance of his real birth) to the protection of Lord George, in
the

the following terms: "If you, Lord George, who once promised to be a father to him, would condescend to undertake that charge, I shall leave the world without regret." Lord George readily accepting the trust, solemnly promised her never to desert the child, but to educate him as his own son.

The Marchioness was extremely affected by the death of Maria, and Alphonso seemed absorbed in a stupid grief. Lord George in vain attempted to console him for the loss of his wife, by presenting to him the little pledge she had left him of her affection. He turned from the child with a kind of horror, and having repeatedly ordered that it might never be introduced in his sight any more, Lord George soon after removed the little innocent out of the family; nor does any of the papers in my possession mention what became of him afterwards.

At the expiration of three months Alphonso's reason seemed to return, when then the Marquis and Marchioness, in order to dissipate the melancholy which still hung about him, again proposed a journey to Spain; and upon his assenting to the proposal, preparations were immediately made, and in a few weeks after the whole family arrived safe in that country, where they were received by all their dependents with the greatest demonstrations of joy.

Having thus brought the narrative to this period, I must refer my Julia to the next Paquet for the birth and history of her

Sincere and affectionate Friend,
JEMIMA.

HISTORY OF PACQUET THE THIRD.

LADY JEMIMA GUZMAN'S HISTORY CONTINUED.

LORD Alphonso, who had now entered the one- and twentieth year of his age, soon found that the sober life he led at the Castle by no means contributed to restore his ease of mind: he, therefore, formed an acquaintance with a party of young gentlemen, who drew him into every kind of dissipation and debauchery. Drinking, gaming, and sensual pleasures, now filled up the whole of his time. In vain did the Marquis his father, as well as Lord George his brother, entreat him to withdraw himself from the company of his present dissolute companions: Alphonso was deaf to the admonitions of both. As to the Marchioness, with sorrow she perceived the abandoned life he led: but too well knowing that all remonstrance and argument would prove vain, she contented herself with lamenting his follies in secret.

Being thus in a manner given up by all his relations, Alphonso without controul gave full scope to the indulgence of every brutal, degrading passion, till at length he had the mortification to find the esteem of his friends lost, his constitution impaired, and his fortune diminished. And now it was that he began to perceive the folly as well as danger of his conduct: his pride, however, would not suffer him to acknowledge it to his friends, who would have rejoiced in such a discovery.

While Alphonso was meditating on the means of restoring his shattered fortune and almost ruined health, the idea of looking out for a wife with a large fortune occurred

occurred to him : but knowing no Spanish lady whom he approved, he determined on a journey to England. This resolution being adopted, he communicated it to his friends ; at the same time assuring them, that his determination was, not to return to Spain till he had united himself to a lady who should do honour to himself and his family.

On his arrival in London, he took a house in one of the fashionable squares ; and being possessed of a title, an elegant person, and a splendid equipage, found no difficulty in introducing himself into the first families of the kingdom. Joy sparkled in every mother's eye where he appeared, and each strove to outvie the other in complaisance and attention. This behaviour, at the same time that it flattered Alphonso's vanity, gratified his pride ; and he determined to ally himself to no woman who was not possessed of rank, beauty, and riches. Among the various beauties which solicited his notice, he had hitherto seen none possessed of charms sufficient to fix his affections ; when one evening, having negligently strolled into the Play-house, he carelessly seated himself by two ladies who accidentally caught his eye on his first entrance into the house. On viewing his companions with attention, and finding them both young, but one in particular uncommonly beautiful, he attempted to engage her in conversation ; but always received an answer which proved her reluctance to enter into discourse with a person of whose rank she was ignorant.

The lady who accompanied her often addressed her by the title of *Lady Susan* ; from which Alphonso found the fair Incognita was of a rank equal to his own. Her pride, however, mortified him. Always accustomed to a kind of adoration from the fair-sex, he felt a chagrin at the indifference of *this* lady which he had never experienced before ; especially as he evidently perceived that it proceeded from no aversion to his person or manners, but solely from that kind of
pri d

pride which seemed to say, "I may perhaps be conversing with a man who is beneath me." This rendered him the more anxious to discover his own rank and quality; and finding the ladies proposed going to Ranelagh, he determined to follow them, in hopes of their picking up some acquaintance who could inform him who she was, as well as communicate his name and family to her.

The ladies quitted the house as soon as the play was ended. Alphonso did not remain long after, and entering the lobby was surprised to find them standing among a crowd of footmen, chairmen, &c. &c. He instantly enquired of the boxkeepers, why those ladies were suffered to stand among such improper company; and being informed that their carriage and servants were not to be found, he stepped forward and made them a tender of his own. At first Lady Susan seemed averse to accept his polite offer; but on hearing the boxkeeper call for Lord Alphonso Guzman's servants, she immediately suffered herself, nothing loth, to be conducted by him to his carriage.

After having seated both the ladies safely, he next begged to have the honour of attending them; a favour which Lady Susan condescended to grant, after having previously requested Alphonso to order the coachman to drive to Ranelagh.

Lady Susan and Alphonso now entered into a conversation, in which if the former displayed no small share of wit, she discovered herself to be possessed of an equal share of pride. Upon entering the Rotunda, which they found very much crowded, several of the acquaintance of each party joined them; and Alphonso being accidentally separated from her Ladyship, had an opportunity of enquiring her name and rank of a gentleman who happened to know her. From this gentleman he learned, that she was the daughter of the late Earl of Wakefield, whose family-name was Villars; that she was possessed of a very ample fortune,
entirely

entirely at her own disposal; that having no relation living, should she happen to die single, her whole fortune, which was upwards of six thousand a-year, would devolve on a person who was almost a stranger to the family; but that if she married, and left issue, either male or female, the whole inheritance would descend to them.

Upon Alphonso asking if she had many admirers, his informer replied in the affirmative; but added, that her excessive pride and haughtiness had deterred all of them from courting an alliance with her Ladyship.

Alphonso thanked the gentleman for his information; and his vanity, not without justice, prompting him to believe that Lady Susan could have no reasonable objection to his person, fortune, or family, he determined to offer her his hand. Having formed this resolution, he again joined her Ladyship; and on her expressing a desire of quitting the place, conducted her to the carriage, and saw her with her companion safe home.

On taking his leave, he requested permission to wait on her Ladyship the next morning, when she invited him to her rout in the evening.

Alphonso's impatience prompting him to wait upon Lady Susan rather sooner than the usual time of visiting, he found her alone at her harpsichord. Her Ladyship received him with apparent pleasure; and endeavoured to throw aside that hauteur with which she had treated him the preceding evening, as well as in the morning, when more company were present.

Alphonso observed this alteration in her behaviour with pleasure; and deeming the present a fair opportunity for cultivating a more intimate acquaintance, the conversation was supported with equal spirit and good-humour on both sides, till the entrance of company put an end to it. In short, Lord Alphonso in a very short time so insinuated himself into her Ladyship's

ship's affections, that on making her an offer of his hand, she accepted it with very little hesitation.

He now thought himself arrived at the summit of his wishes; fondly supposing that neither her ladyship's pride nor haughtiness would continue after her marriage with him: in this persuasion, however, he found himself miserably deceived. The preliminary articles of settlements, pin-money, &c. being concluded, Alphonso wrote to the Marquis, acquainting him with his present engagement, and requesting from Lady Susan as well as himself, that their nuptials might be honoured with the company of his father, mother, and brother. As these tender friends needed little solicitation to comply with Alphonso's request, they immediately set off for England, where, on their arrival, they found every necessary preparation for the wedding in such forwardness, that Lady Susan in a very few days after became Alphonso's wife.

During the first two months after their marriage, our new-married pair lived tolerably happy: but before the end of the third month, Alphonso discovered that his lady was as much enamoured of dress, company, and dissipation, as himself: however, well knowing that she had an undoubted right to enjoy every pleasure which could be procured by the large fortune she had brought him, he treated her follies and extravagancies with equal indifference and neglect. The Marquis and Marchioness often lamented that Alphonso had made his election of a lady so violently attached to the pleasures and dissipation of the gay world; yet as often would the Marchioness exclaim, "How dare we repine? Were we contented when he married a woman who appeared to possess every amiable as well as valuable qualification? Yet now we are dissatisfied, though he has allied himself to a woman every way suitable to his rank."

Lady Susan was extremely desirous to have a child, being very unwilling that her estate should descend to strangers;

strangers; she however always added, that "if it was not a boy, she should hate it."

About two years after her marriage, her Ladyship being delivered of a daughter (who is your Jemima), prepared herself to hate me from the moment she heard of my sex; while my father, upon receiving the usual congratulations from the nurse, &c. turned upon his heel, saying, that "he should have been better pleased if it had been a boy." Thus was I in a manner immediately deserted by both my parents. My birth, however, was welcomed in a different manner by the Marquis and Marchioness, who received me to their arms with equal pleasure and delight; as did likewise my uncle Lord George, who joined with his father in instantly pronouncing that I was the picture of the Marchioness.

At the end of a week my mother desired to see the little *fright*. Being taken to her, and happening to cry just as I was put into her arms, she peevishly exclaimed, "Take the little cross brat away!" Happily for myself, I was at that moment equally insensible to her kindness or unkindness.

In the first visit Lord George paid to Lady Susan after her *accouchement*, he asked her, if she was not charmed with her little daughter? "Why," (replied she) "it is not quite such a *fright* as I at first thought it; but I should much rather have had a son;" to which my father added, that "I was a pretty creature enough, as I was very like my grandmother" (consequently I must have resembled him, as he was the counterpart of the Marchioness).

As soon as I had attained the fourth year of my age, the Marchioness who thought it necessary for me to learn something more than I could acquire in the nursery, and who observed that my parents appeared equally indifferent to my education as to my person, requested their permission to let me live with her, promising to superintend the care of my education. Lady Susan

Susan readily complied with her desire, as she felt not the least emotion of sorrow or reluctance to part with me.

I was accordingly removed to the Marquis's house, where I passed five years in the utmost tranquility and happiness, during which I was instructed in every polite and useful accomplishment.

When I was about ten years old, the Marquis was under the necessity of going to Spain for some time; and though he had made several temporary excursions for a few weeks, he was unwilling to go for a longer time from home without the Marchioness. For my part, I remember I was overwhelmed with sorrow at the thought of parting with all my friends at once (for such I considered the Marquis and Marchioness to be): my mother, however, having conceived an inclination to see Spain, told my father that she wished to accompany them; and he not daring to refuse her, immediately assented, and preparations were accordingly made for the journey.

Upon the arrival of the two families in Spain, I still continued to reside with the Marquis and Marchioness during an interval of two years, when I found myself deprived of both these affectionate friends and relations, first by the death of the Marquis, and afterwards by that of the Marchioness, who only survived him four months. I forgot to mention one circumstance, which was, that when I was about seven years of age, my uncle Lord George left England to make the tour of Europe. A few days before he left London he presented me with a diamond ring inclosed in the following lines:

Should stern Adversity's rude storms assail,
Let not JEMINA's hope nor spirits fail:
In each sad hour of sorrow or distress,
Still let her not despair of happiness:
Still let her trust, the Donor of this Ring,
May future years of peace and pleasure bring.

At

At the time of the Marquis's death Lord George was not returned from his tour ; and he arrived likewise too late to pay the last filial duties to his mother.

After the death of these two well beloved, much-lamented relatives, I was removed to my father's house, where I found the scene so very different from that to which I had been accustomed, that terrified by the dismal prospect which now presented itself, I fell into a kind of stupefaction : this was succeeded soon after by a violent fit of sickness, during which Lord George returned to Spain and settled his affairs, but quitted it again before I was recovered, as he was unable longer to remain in a place which continually reminded him of the loss of parents whom he so tenderly loved ; not to mention that he was equally disgusted and offended by the indifference and the composure with which my father had taken possession of the late Marquis's title and estate.

Of all these particulars I was informed by my maid : the incidents of the former part of this history I learned from the Marchioness a short time before she died. My father, however, did not live long to enjoy his title and estate : for I had scarcely entered my fifteenth year when he was seized with a mortal disease, of which he died in two days. This proved another severe stroke to my happiness as well as fortune ; for my father having left every thing to my mother's disposal, I had nothing which I could call my own except a few jewels and a legacy left me by my grandmother : and though I had never received any particular marks of kindness from my father, yet he had never treated me with the rigour I had experienced from my mother, who scarcely ever spoke to me, and who never suffered me to enter the room when any company were present ; by which means I led a life of retirement, books, drawing and music filling up the whole of my time.

I had

I had lived twelve months in this situation, when, one day, as I was sitting in my dressing-room, reading Thomson's Seasons, my mother entered, and in a much kinder tone than she had ever spoke to me before, enquired after my health; adding, that she should be glad of my company to the play that evening. I need not tell you, perhaps, that I accepted her kind invitation with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness; and instantly ringing for my maid ordered my things to dress. I must own I took no small pains in completing this task; for though I had visited every place of public amusement during the life of the Marchioness, I was then too young to attend to what was said either of my person, dress, or manners. But my vanity having been excited and flattered by the profusion of praises daily paid to my person or accomplishments by the dependents which generally surround all young ladies of a certain rank in life, my dear Julia will not perhaps be surprised to be told of my taking some pains to adorn myself.

As soon as I was dress'd, I went into the drawing-room, where I found a great number of well-dressed persons of both sexes assembled, some of whom I had before seen in the late Marchioness's life-time. As soon as tea was over, we went to the play, when my mother, contrary to my wish and expectations, placed me in the front of the box, where I had not sat long before I observed every eye fixed upon me. From this embarrassing situation, by which I was exceedingly distressed, I was however happily soon relieved by the attention of a lady who sat next to me, and who, perceiving my confusion, kindly endeavoured by her conversation to divert my attention from the penetrating looks of the impertinent starers who surrounded us. However, just as the last act began, I heard a voice behind me exclaim, "Heavens, my lady! "who is that divine creature?" Upon turning round to see from whom this romantic exclamation proceeded,

ceeded, I observed a petit figure standing by my mother with his eyes riveted upon me. Picture to yourself a little short swarthy man about forty, with large goggle eyes, a long hooked nose, a wide mouth, and very ugly black teeth, and you will form no incorrect idea of the *amiable* personage who had thus incontinently acknowledged the force of my charms. My mother answered his question by saying, "It is my daughter, my Lord." On this, advancing forward, and complimenting me, he expressed his hope that he should be better acquainted with me. I bowed, but made no reply; for such was the disgust I had already conceived to his person, that I wished to avoid even speaking to him.

The play being ended he led me to the carriage, and after handing in the Marchioness, desired permission to see us home; to which my mother assenting, I had by this means an opportunity of observing his conversation and manner, both of which I found to be as vulgar and disagreeable, as his person was frightful and disgusting. As soon as we reached home he took his leave, though not without an invitation from my mother to dine with her the next day.

During supper, my mother asked me how I liked the Marquis D'Almeyda? Without the least hesitation I told her, that I was equally disgusted with his person and his manners. She made no reply, and soon after we retired to rest.

The next morning I was summoned to breakfast with my mother, after which she ordered me to dress for dinner. Surprised as I was at this alteration in her behaviour, I was determined to take no notice of it, at least for the present. A whole week passed in this manner, during which I was wholly engrossed by company at home, or dining abroad with my mother: but whether we dined at home or abroad, the Marquis was always sure to be of the party, as well as always to be near me; and though I had many admirers, they all kept aloof when he was present.

I was beginning to think myself completely happy, when, at the end of the above mentioned week I found myself to be completely miserable.

As I was sitting one day in the drawing-room waiting for my mother, the Marquis D'Almeyda entered. On seeing me alone, he instantly flew towards me, and seizing my hand, exclaimed, "My dear Lady Je-
"mima, how happy am I to find you thus! I have
"long wished for this lucky moment, but despaired
"of ever meeting with it." He then made a full declaration of his passion, and concluded with assuring me, that he should be miserable without me. As I had expected from his preamble what followed, I answered with equal ease and composure, that I was greatly obliged to him for the good opinion he was pleased to entertain of me, but that I thought myself too young to enter into the state of matrimony. He attempted to turn what I said into ridicule, by replying, that all young ladies pretended to think so at first; upon which I told him in the most serious tone and manner I was capable of assuming, that at present I had no thoughts or intentions of changing my condition; and that I had never yet seen the man I could approve as a husband. The Marquis, colouring with anger, said, he fancied I should find myself mistaken, and abruptly left the room.

I was very much surprised at a behaviour so different from what I should have expected from a man who pretended to adore me, as well as not a little alarmed at his declaration on leaving the room, that *he fancied I should find myself mistaken*. I was not ignorant that he was a great favourite of my mother's; I also knew, that in whatever party of pleasure I was engaged, she was sure to engage him likewise: all this, joined to the sudden alteration in her behaviour, not a little perplexed me; for during the preceding sixteen years, she had scarcely spoken twenty words to me till the present week.

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These reflections engrossed my attention so much, that my mother entered the room without my perceiving her. Finding I did not observe her, she said, "Je-
"mima, you are very thoughtful!"

I started at her voice, and rising, sat down again, scarcely knowing what I did; when she thus went on:

"So, I hear the Marquis D'Almeyda has done you
"the honour to offer you his hand?"

"The honour, Madam!" repeated I.

"Ay, child, to be sure! Don't you think it such?"

"I hope you accepted his offer."

"No, indeed, my Lady, I did not."

"Is there any other man you like better?"

"Not one."

"Why, then, do you refuse him? He has a large
"estate, and no contemptible understanding; and
"though he is not quite so young and handsome as
"perhaps you might wish, yet, take him altogether,
"he is not so much amiss."

In vain I pleaded my dislike to his person and manners; she peremptorily ordered me to receive the Marquis as a man destined by her for my husband; and after having sternly told me that I should never have any other, hastily left the room.

Seeing now too plainly what I had to expect, I endeavoured to bring myself to think more favourable of him; but in vain; and I left the drawing-room with the determined resolution of never becoming the wife of the Marquis D'Almeyda.

When I went down to dinner, I found a room full of company, among whom was the Marquis. He spoke very little; and whenever I chanced to meet the eyes of my mother, she looked at me with a frown of contempt.

As soon as the cloth was removed, I withdrew; but had scarcely been in my dressing-room ten minutes before the Marquis entered. Surprised at an interruption so uncommon, I exclaimed, "Pray, Sir, what means
"this intrusion?"

“ I am sorry, Madam, (replied he) that you deem it
 “ such, as I have the sanction of the Marchioness for
 “ the liberty I have taken. I am come once more
 “ to solicit your hand, and to beg a decisive answer.”

“ I should have thought, Sir, the answer I formerly
 “ gave you, would have been sufficient; but since I
 “ find it is not, I must beg leave to assure you, that
 “ it is the fixed determination of Jemima Guzman
 “ never to become the wife of the Marquis D’Almey-
 “ da.”

He bit his lips, walked about the room for some mo-
 ments, and at last replied, “ Very well, young lady;
 “ and so you are firmly resolved never to marry the
 “ Marquis D’Almeyda! I can assure you, however,
 “ that your mother will never consent to see you the
 “ wife of any other man.”

“ I am heartily sorry for it.”

At that moment my mother entered, with a counte-
 nance in every feature of which was pictured rage,
 revenge, and disappointment.

“ How dare you, hussy,” cried she, in a voice that
 made me tremble, “ dispute my will? Prepare at the
 “ expiration of three days from this time to become
 “ the Marchioness D’Almeyda; that is, my Lord, if
 “ you will condescend to accept of her.”

The Marquis assured her, that nothing would give
 him more pleasure, notwithstanding the seeming aver-
 sion I had expressed to him.

My mother then again turning to me, said, “ Re-
 “ member, in three days I shall resign you to the care
 “ of one, whom I am afraid will treat you too kindly;”
 “ and with this speech she left the room.

The odious figure whom she had left behind now ad-
 vancing to me, said, “ I am sorry, Lady Jemima, I
 “ should occasion you any pain; but why (continued
 “ he) will you thus dispute the will of your mother?”

“ Because,

"Because, Sir, I find it utterly impossible to obey her; and if you really feel the love you pretend for me, I am sure you will resign all thoughts of me."

"No, never; (cried he, with vehemence) and you will find, Madam, that you will be compelled, disgusting as I may appear to you, to receive me as your husband; for never will I relinquish you, but with life; though you have almost rendered yourself hateful to me;" and with this dreadful menace he quitted the room.

Think, my dear Julia, what must have been my sensations at such a threat as this! If he was capable of treating me thus before, what had I not to dread from him after marriage? His behaviour, therefore, only served to strengthen my resolution, and I once more determined never to become his wife.

The next morning I received a message from my mother to attend her in her dressing-room: I immediately obeyed the summons, and on my entrance was desired to be seated, when she thus began:

"I am very much surprised, Lady Jemima, at your obstinacy, in refusing the hand of the Marquis D'Almeyda. I have before asked you, if you prefer any other man to him? If you do, let me know it, and I will allow you more time to conquer a passion which you may have too hastily entertained." Here she stopped.

I assured her in reply, that there was not a man living for whom I felt the least partiality; but that at the same time I could not consent to an union with the Marquis.—"I trust, my dear Madam," added I, rising, and throwing myself at her feet, "that you would not wish to see your only child miserable; yet that, indeed, my dear Mamma, will be the case, should I suffer myself to be persuaded to marry him."

She then arose from her seat, and ordering me to do the same, took my hand, saying, "I'll tell you what, child; you may talk for ever about your dislikes and your miseries, and all that; but I suppose you are not now to be taught, that when once my resolution is fixed, nothing can shake it. Another thing I must add, is, that I had rather see you miserable than forfeit my word; for having pledged my honour, that in less than a week you shall become the Marquis's wife, should you still persevere in opposing my will, you must never expect to see my face any more. Consider my honour, therefore, and your own dependent situation, and let me know your determination in two hours." So saying, she left the room, leaving me almost petrified with horror at a speech at once so cruel, unfeeling, and unnatural.

I retired to my chamber in a state of mind not to be described, and throwing myself into a chair, indulged my tears, which now streamed apace, and endeavoured to reason myself into a more favourable opinion of the Marquis d'Almeyda; but all in vain; for the moment I began to think of him with any degree of temper, his last horrid speech rushed into my thoughts, and overturned every suggestion in his favour.

In this manner did I pass the two hours allotted me for my determination, when I received a message from my mother, to let me know that they were expired; at the same time she ordered my maid, who brought it, to tell me, that if I had not returned to a proper sense of my duty, I had better not appear before her. As I was fully sensible that I should only irritate her by my presence, I was very glad to excuse myself, and, taking up my pen, wrote as follows:

"Honoured Madam,

"SORRY am I to dispute your will; but, indeed, indeed, I find it utterly impossible, after the most mature deliberation, to comply with your commands. I
"will

“ will solemnly bind myself not to enter into any engagement without your consent and approbation ;
“ neither will I, in any thing else, dispute your will ;
“ but with this forgive me, honoured Madam, if I
“ assure you I never can comply. Ah ! my dearest
“ mamma, if you knew the joy I have experienced in
“ this short week, and likewise the misery I have felt
“ the last two days, you would pity me ; I am sure
“ you would : but I will no longer trespass on your
“ patience, but conclude myself,

“ Dearest Madam,

“ Your most dutiful Daughter,

“ in every respect but this,

“ JEMIMA GUZMAN.”

I dispatched this note by my maid, and waited with impatience for an answer ; but, to my great surprize and terror, when my maid returned, who was a faithful good girl, I observed her in tears. On my desiring to know what had passed, she told me, that the Marquis D’Almeyda was present when she delivered my letter : that my mother, after reading it, reddening with rage, tore it in an hundred pieces, and trampling on it, bid the girl tell her mistress, that she would treat the writer in the same manner if she was there.

After this I had nothing to expect but the most rigorous treatment. I therefore resigned myself to Providence ; and happening by chance to observe my Ring, could not help exclaiming, “ Oh ! Lord George, “ where are you now ? ”

I passed three hours in the most dreadful suspense to be imagined, when I received a message from my mother to attend her in the parlour : I complied with her commands with a heavy heart. On entering the room, I saw my mother sitting at a table covered with parchments : at her right hand sat the Marquis D’Almeyda, and on the left stood two gentlemen, who were strangers.

My mother, on my entrance (in a kinder tone than I expected) bid me come forward. I did so, though scarcely able to get to the table, I trembled so exceedingly. She then took a pen, and presenting it to me, desired I would sign those writings. I took it, and throwing my eyes over the paper, perceived the words "Articles of marriage." Instantly dropping the pen, I declared no power on earth should compel me to sign such a paper against my inclination. My mother in a rage asked, how I dare thus to dispute her will? And at the same time taking up another pen, was preparing to put it into my hand, when, unable to support myself, I sunk upon the floor in a fainting fit.

I recollected nothing that passed for some time; but when I at length recovered, found myself on my bed, my maid standing by me with streaming eyes. On enquiry for my mother, Marianne told me, that as soon as she perceived me to be reviving, she had left the room. Upon asking if she seemed shocked at my condition? Marianne answered, Yes; but in a tone of voice which plainly indicated that what she said was merely designed to comfort me.

In half an hour I was surprised by a visit from my mother, who, after seating herself by my bed-side, and enquiring after my health (though in a tone of voice which plainly told me that her anger was far from being subsided) desired to know if I would sign the writings the next morning? "Good Heaven! Madam, can you still desire such a sacrifice? Have you been witness to the situation to which those odious writings reduced me, and can you still command me to obey you?"

"I do, (returned she) and shall likewise expect to see you Marchioness D'Almeyda before to-morrow night."

"No, Madam," replied I, with a spirit I thought I could not have assumed, "no power on earth, I here solemnly declare, shall ever compel me to give my hand at the altar to the Marquis."

My

My mother instantly flew into a violent rage, at the same time exclaiming, as she left the room, that she would make every vein in my heart bleed for this undutiful behaviour.

I lay for some moments revolving in my mind what plan of conduct I should adopt, when I at last determined by some expedient to effect my escape, and, tho' I knew not whither or to whom to fly, to commit myself to Providence for my future welfare and happiness. With this resolution I arose, and taking what money I had in my possession, with my watch, a few jewels of my grandmother's, together with her's and my grandfather's pictures, and sewing them all up in a little bag, put them into my pocket: as to the diamond ring given me by my uncle, I usually wore it on my finger. Having thus arranged my little matters, I determined to wait the family's going to rest to carry my design into execution.

About eleven o'clock my maid entered my room, exclaiming, "O! Madam, where will your distresses end? Your Mamma has ordered me to give you your hat and cloak."

"Hat and cloak! (repeated I) What do you mean?"

"God knows, Madam; but my heart strangely misgives me; for there is a coach-and-six at the door to convey you no one knows whither."

Astonished as I was at this intelligence, I bid her comply with my mother's directions. The faithful Marianne accordingly gave me my hat and cloak, with streaming eyes; and just as I was leaving the room, threw herself on her knees before me, and exclaimed, "My dear, dear Lady, when shall I see you again?"

I held out my hand to her, unable to speak; but a flood of tears coming to my relief, I said, "Do you know whither I am going?"

"O! no, Madam, no! but we are afraid you will be carried to the Old Castle."

I had not time to ask an explanation, as I heard my mother's voice on the stairs, enquiring if I was ready: I therefore pressing Marianne's hand, bid her be comforted, and left her.

On entering the parlour, my mother rose, and said, "So, Miss, I think you said in the pretty epistle you sent me this morning, that you should obey me in every thing but one; I think it my duty, however, to endeavour to make you all obedience; therefore follow me."

I followed her to the gate, where the coach was waiting; and after ordering me to step in, she seated herself by me. We rode on in profound silence some time. For my part, I could not form the least idea whither I was going. I had heard my grandmother mention an old Castle which had been inhabited by my great-grandfather, but I could not conceive what purpose could be effected by shutting me up there. We travelled in this manner till morning, when, about eight o'clock, we stopped at an old-fashioned building, the exterior of which resembled in every respect that of a prison.

The large iron gates grated on the rusty hinges. The person who opened them (an old woman) seemed to be about sixty years of age, and her face looked the emblem of ill-nature. She spoke to my mother, but in so low a voice that I could not distinguish what she said.

Having quitted the carriage we walked through a large court-yard, which led us to an old antiquated building, which seemed tumbling down with age. We next entered a hall (whose walls likewise appeared to be in a mouldering state) paved with black marble cracked in several places, and hung round with old pieces of armour, fire-arms, rusty swords, &c. &c. The whole seemed calculated to strike me with horror and dismay.

We now came to a parlour, which was clean, neat, and well-furnished. This room I found was appropriated

ated to the use of the old woman. Here my mother, turning to me, said, " This, *Jemima*, is the place " I have at present destined for your abode ; at least " till you return to a sense of your duty. Don't think " the treatment you may receive from this good woman " severe, as she acts solely by my orders." She then left the room, not giving me time to reply.

I stood motionless, scarcely knowing whether what I had seen or heard was a dream or a reality ; at length recollection returning, I asked the woman if my mother was gone ; when she replied in the affirmative : I afterwards proposed several other questions, to all which she answered in as concise a manner as possible. Finding I could derive no information from her, I desired to have some breakfast ; after which I requested to see the apartment where I was to sleep. She immediately conducted me thro' another hall to a stair-case ; which both of us having ascended, she opened the door of a large room ; and after saying, " This, *Madam*, is " your apartment," walked down again, without farther ceremony.

I entered it trembling, as the room was so dark, I could scarcely see my way ; but perceiving a glimmering light thro' the window-shutter, I ventured to open it, and found it looked into a garden over run with weeds. I tried to open the casement, but to my great disappointment found it fastened with a padlock.

With a sigh I now turned to view my apartment, which, as I before observed, was very large. At the farther end was a fire-place, which seemed to have been long disused. The furniture, which was crimson satin, consisted of six old-fashioned large elbow chairs, (so crazy, that I was almost afraid to sit down on them) two tables, a chest of drawers, and a couch. Such were the contents of the apartment destined for my future residence.

Perceiving another door, I advanced towards it, and turning its key entered a room somewhat smaller than

than the former, where stood a large bed, the pillars of which seemed to have been steel, but were now entirely encrusted with rust, and on the top was placed a coronet. The furniture of this curious bedstead, which had been formerly white, appeared to be much injured by the moth. The window-curtains, of which there were three in the room, had been evidently made to suit the bed; and the chairs were of fine carved wood, but as antient as those of the other room: a looking-glass and a small table completed the furniture of my bedchamber.

I stood for some minutes gazing in silent horror, when clasping my hands, and at the same time falling on my knees, I exclaimed, "O! my God, what will become of me?" A violent flood of tears coming to my relief, somewhat eased me; then offering up a petition to the Divine Disposer of all events, I found my mind somewhat more calm, tranquil, and resigned.

I had scarcely recovered myself, when the old woman opening the door, desired to know what I chose for dinner. I replied, that I should be satisfied with any thing she might bring me; after which requesting to know if I might be permitted to walk in the garden, she answered in the affirmative; and then desiring me to follow her, conducted me by a back way to the garden-door. In the garden, which still retained marks of its former grandeur and elegance, I rambled for near two hours without seeing any-body, when, turning down a walk which led to the house, I was surprised by the sight of a man digging, and who pulling off his hat on perceiving me, a sudden thought suggested itself that I might render him useful to me. I accordingly asked him if he belonged to the house, when he answered, "Yes, Madam; my name is Morvo, and I am son to the person who takes care of this castle."

Pleased

Pleased at finding him so communicative, I begged to know if he could inform me to whom the Castle belonged?

"Why, Madam, it has not been inhabited by any of the Guzman family for upwards of these hundred years. In consequence of some strange notions the last inhabitant took in his head, none of his successors chose to make any use of it; and I verily believe some of them scarcely knew they had such a place belonging to them: but the late Marquis's grandfather having accidentally paid a visit to it, and being a great lover of Gothic structure, intended to have had it repaired, and accordingly looked out for some person to live in it; when finding my mother willing to undertake it, he had a small apartment fitted up for her, and settled on her a pension of fifty pounds a-year. He had also employed workmen to repair the building; when soon after it pleasing God, to take him, his son neglected it, and never took any other notice of it, than punctually to pay my mother her annuity."

Here he ended; and I was just going to question him further, when, perceiving his mother, he turned down the next walk, and was out of sight in a moment. The old woman hurried to me as fast as her feet would permit her, saying, "Ha! Madam! who was you talking to?"

"Nobody."

"No! I'm sure I thought I heard your voice. Have you seen my son?"

"Your son! Why, have you a son?" for I was afraid of owning I had, lest I should excite any suspicions in her.

"'Tis no matter; dinner is ready, if your Ladyship pleases to walk in."

I followed her into the house with a much lighter heart than I felt on entering the garden: she then desired

fired me to walk up stairs, where she would bring dinner immediately. I told her I should be better pleased to dine below; she smiled, and said "that would not do," and then hurried away. Finding I must comply, I ascended the stairs of my prison; for in no other light could I bring myself to consider it: Morvo soon followed with a boiled chicken and an apple-tart.

While I was eating, I asked her if she could procure me pen and ink, as I wanted to write to my mother. She replied, she had strict orders to allow me neither.

"That's very hard! (returned I) Am I to have nothing to amuse me within these solitary, dismal walls?"

"I don't know," was all the answer she vouchsafed to make me.

"Pray, do you know why I am confined thus closely?"

"You, my Lady, certainly know better than I do; I therefore beg you will eat your dinner, as I am expressly forbid to answer any questions whatever."

Finding she was determined to obey her instructions, I continued silent till I had dined, when I desired to know if I was allowed the use of two rooms only. She could not help smiling, spite of her ill-nature; at the same time replying, "I should think, Madam, these two rooms, with the liberty of the garden, were sufficient for your use."

"O, very well," said I, (rejoiced to hear her acquiesce in my walking in the garden) "tis no matter."

She then went down stairs: I soon followed her; and meeting with no interruption entered the garden with a light heart, In hopes of again meeting the gardener. I was however disappointed, for he was no where to be seen. The fall of a sudden shower of rain obliged me to return to the house; soon after which the old woman brought me tea and candles, to my no small joy; for the rain continued to fall with great violence,

lence, and was accompanied with such high gusts of wind as to make the whole building shake. Before she removed the tea-table, she enquired what I chose to have for supper. I told her, nothing; after which she left me, in spite of all my entreaties to the contrary. About ten o'clock she came again to tell me that she was going to bed, and to know if I wanted any thing. I replied, that I was very much terrified to be left thus alone, and begged her for pity's sake to stay with me; but in vain: she very coldly wished me a good-night, and walked away.

I now found myself quite in an agony. At every gust of wind I expected the door to fly open, and a hundred Hobgoblins to enter the room; for I recollected what the gardener had told me of a strange notion that had formerly prevailed of the house being haunted. Thus did I sit for a full hour in a state of mind not to be described: at last, on hearing the clock strike one, I ventured to bed, having first placed the candle in the window, thinking that to be the safest place; then covering myself up with the bedcloaths, and recommending myself to the protection of Providence, I endeavoured to compose myself to sleep. I had not lain long, however, before I was disturbed by the strangest noise I had ever heard in my life. Starting up in my bed, to my inexpressible terror I found the light of the candle was extinguished; and soon after I heard something tread across the room. I again lay down, and covering myself with the bedcloaths, heard nothing for some time; till, just as I was trying to persuade myself the whole might be an illusion of fancy, I felt something leap upon my bed. I gave a violent shriek, and through fear and terror I suppose fainted, as I recollected nothing that passed for some hours: however, when I opened my eyes, to my great joy I found it was day-light.

I lay for some moments to recover myself, when looking towards the door, I perceived it to stand wide open

open (for I had not locked it, as I could find no key): my window-shutter was also open, and the candlestick was on the floor. At last I got up; but before I could put on my cloaths the old woman entered the room.

"Lord ha' mercy! (exclaimed the beldame) what a night we have had! Ha'n't you heard the wind?"

"God knows what I have heard (replied I), but I have been frightened so much, that I will never enter a bed again in this house: I will sooner sit up the whole night."

Without making me any answer, she suddenly screamed out, "La! if there are not three rats in the trap!"

"Rats! (exclaimed I) Heavens! is it possible I can have been so much alarmed, and terrified by rats only, during the night."

I then related what had passed, which only excited a laugh in the brutish woman.

"Lord! (cried she) you here a whole day, and not know there were rats! Why, there's not a room in the house but what is over-run with them."

I made no reply; but telling her I would walk in the garden till breakfast was ready, left her, though she told me I should find it very wet.

I walked for some time without seeing the gardener; but at last, to my great joy, espied him at some little distance. I immediately hastened to him, and, in order to draw him into farther conversation, accosted him with, "Pray, Mr. Morvo, do you think the present Marquis de Guzman knows any thing of the ruinous state of this castle?"

"No, Madam, (replied he) I believe not, for his father never visited it; but your father, Madam, was acquainted with it, as he and his lady (your mother) came to see it not long before he died."

Finding from this that he was not ignorant of my story,

story, I thought it best to come to an explanation with him at once.

"Pray, do you know the reason of my confinement here, and how long it is to continue?"

"The reason of your being confined here, my Lady, is, I believe, on account of refusing the Marquis D'Almeyda; and as to how long it will continue, I am inclined to think that it will last till you consent to marry him."

"Then that will never be (returned I)! though this earth will not be burthened with me long, if I can find no means to escape, or at least to convey a letter to my uncle."

"Ah! Madam, would it were in my power to tell you where he was; but I greatly fear"—Here he stopped.

"Good Heaven! (exclaimed I) surely he is not dead!"

"Do not be too much shocked, my Lady, if I answer you that I am too much afraid he is; at least report says so; and I have some reason to think that to-morrow the Marchioness herself will confirm it."

"Then," lifting up my hands and my eyes to Heaven, "I have not one friend left in the world! Gracious Heaven! what will become of the wretched Jemima?"

"I, Madam, would prove a friend to you, spite of the great inequality betwixt us, might I be allowed to offer you my advice."

"Speak! Can you—will you deliver me?"

"Why, Madam, my mother, as you may perceive, is very strict. The Marchioness will be here to-morrow, when she purposes once more to endeavour to persuade you to an union with the Marquis. If you consent, she will take you home with her: if you do not, the Marquis is to accompany her here the following day, when you will be compelled to give him your hand."

I shud-

I shuddered to hear this relation, and instantly told Morvo, if it was in his power to deliver me from my present confinement, I would reward him for such a service.

“ In my power, Madam, it certainly is, as I have
 “ all the keys in my possession every night ; and if in
 “ the interview with your mother to-morrow you find
 “ things to be as I say, I *will* deliver you : as to re-
 “ ward, I require none.—But I wish, Madam, you
 “ would retire to another part of the garden ; and if
 “ by any unforeseen circumstance I should not happen
 “ to see you sooner, you will to-morrow afternoon
 “ find a note underneath this bush.”—He then, without giving me time to reply, instantly walked away.

Scarcely could I refrain from falling on my knees in the garden to thank the Almighty for thus raising me a friend where I least expected to find one : however, I walked towards the house, and was met by the old woman, who was coming to seek me.

I passed this much in the same manner I had done the preceding day, except, indeed, that I was more calm and composed in my mind. I ventured to go to bed at night, having obtained a lamp to burn, and slept tolerably well. I did not rise till nine o'clock the next morning, and had scarcely breakfasted, when the old woman came to tell me the Marchioness was arrived. I went down ; but to relate the conversation which passed between us is impossible : I wept, kneeled, and entreated, but in vain : she said, that she was determined on my marrying the Marquis : that she had brought me my cloaths, and some books ; but before the week was expired I *should* be the Marquis's wife : that he proposed coming to the Castle the next day, when she should accompany him, and that they intended to stay there the remainder of the week. In vain I objected to his religion, in vain complained of his ill temper ; this was the scheme proposed, and it

should

should be executed. She likewise mentioned the circumstance of my uncle's death, which she said happened on shipboard, and soon afterwards left me.

I sat for some time in a kind of despondency, till at last, arousing myself, I determined to make use of the gardener's offer, and effect my escape. With this resolution I walked into the garden, where I found the faithful Morvo waiting for me.

"Well, Madam, what is your determination?"

"To escape from this place, if possible."

"Very well, Madam, you may depend on having a chaise ready, with two men (for whose fidelity I will answer with my life) to protect you, between the hours of twelve and one this night. In the mean time, if you will pack up your cloaths, I will think upon some method to convey them away, while my mother takes her afternoon's nap."

I was preparing to thank him, when he prevented me by saying, "Hold, Madam, no thanks are due: only be quick in packing up your cloaths." Then turning hastily away, he abruptly left me.

I hurried to my apartment, where, after falling on my knees, and returning thanks to an all-gracious Providence for his past and present mercies, and fervently praying for the continuance of his future protection, I prepared to arrange my little affairs.

I had in the morning put on a riding-dress. I now packed up the few cloaths and books I had, together with my money and jewels, except a present which I designed for the faithful Morvo. I then sat down, the tears streaming from my eyes, when chancing to look upon the *Ring* my uncle gave me, "Ah! (exclaimed I) why could not you, Lord George, continue here? Your life would then have been preserved, while the poor Jemima would at least have had one friend to fly to for protection." Upon recovering myself, and again revolving the step I was about to take in throwing myself, though not quite seventeen, on the world,

world, without friend or protector, I found, that as it would be necessary to fix upon some plan for my future subsistence, it would be most prudent to change my name, as well to elude a future search, as to preserve my rank in life secret. I therefore immediately determined upon assuming that of MEADOWS; by which name I have been known ever since.

By this time the old woman had brought up dinner; when observing that I eat very little, she hoped, she said, I should eat more when I had company. I made her no reply; and having finished a very sparing meal, she went away.

I now waited with the utmost impatience for Morvo, who, in less than an hour, appeared to carry away my trunk, bringing with him an empty one, to avoid suspicion, in case his mother should miss mine: a precaution which I had entirely forgot. I then offered him the present I intended for him, when, to my great mortification, he would only accept a moiety of it, in spite of every thing I could urge to the contrary. He told me, that about one o'clock I might expect him, when he would conduct me safely out of the house: and taking up my trunk, hurried down stairs.

To describe the agitation of my mind during the intervening hours is impossible, uncertain as I was how this affair might terminate, as well as equally uncertain what might become of me afterwards.

About ten o'clock the old woman came as usual to wish me a good night. I told her I was going to bed directly, and, to avoid suspicion, affected to make preparations for that purpose. The time between her leaving me and that of my deliverance, I spent in prayers for my happy escape and future safety.

In a few minutes after the clock had struck One, the faithful Morvo entered my room. Upon his taking my hand to lead me down stairs, an instant trembling took possession of my whole frame, my feet refused their office, and I must have fainted, had not a shower

of

of tears come to my relief. Morvo perceiving my situation, took me in his arms, and carried me down to the garden, when the fresh air immediately revived me, and I found my drooping spirits return, on viewing the fineness of the night: (for the moon shone in all her lustre) not one dark cloud appeared, but each star seemed to vie with the other in brilliancy. As soon as we came in sight of the chaise, I stopped to thank my deliverer, and again urged him to accept what he had before refused; but all in vain; he only requested me to be expeditious, for fear of a surprize. I accordingly hastened to the chaise, when giving Morvo my hand by way of bidding him farewell, I jumped in, and ordered the men to drive on agreeably to the directions they had received from the faithful gardener.

I arrived at the inn where I proposed to stop, about seven in the morning. After paying the drivers, I inquired for the landlord, by whom I desired to be informed, if he knew of any ship sailing soon for England. He replied, that there was one going out of the harbour directly, as the wind served. On asking if there was any English company on board, he answered, there were two ladies and three gentlemen. I then told him, I did not care how soon I joined them, upon which he hurried away to treat for my passage, and soon returned with an assurance, that he had settled every necessary preliminary with the captain. I ordered some breakfast, and had scarcely finished it, when the servant came to tell the ship was ready to sail.

Upon entering the vessel, to my very great joy, I perceived myself to be entirely among strangers; but I felt my spirits so greatly depressed, that it was with the utmost difficulty I restrained my tears, especially as all eyes were fixed upon me: however, the affable and easy behaviour of the ladies, joined to the polite attentions of the gentlemen, soon dissipated my timidity, and reconciled me to the novelty as well as awkwardness

wardness of my situation. It happened very fortunately for me, that both the ladies and gentlemen were persons of rank, and being all English, were in consequence accommodated by the captain, who was an Englishman likewise, with every convenience his cabin afforded. One of the ladies, however, was so exceedingly sea-sick, that she was unable to sit up; and as I found myself very little if at all affected by the motion of the vessel, I requested permission to render her any services in my power. In short I was happy enough to make myself so useful and agreeable to this lady, (who was no other than the good Lady Mary Norton) that she professed an affection for me, begged to know my name and situation in life, and offered me her protection. Bursting into tears, I thanked her in the most respectful terms for her friendly proposal, but intreated her to excuse my concealing my real name. I then told her, that I had eloped from my friends in order to avoid a marriage with a man whom I detested; that I proposed assuming the name of *Meadows*; and that I wished to engage myself as a companion to a lady. In reply she assured me, that she would exert her influence and connexions to serve me; at the same time adding, that I should be very welcome to an assylum in her house till I could fix myself.

Tears of gratitude flowed from my eyes at a generosity so unexpected, and I thanked her in the best manner I was able.

After a short and pleasant voyage, we arrived in England, when I immediately accompanied Lady Norton to her country-seat, where I first became acquainted with my dear Julia; and I can sincerely assure you, that from the first time of my seeing you, I conceived an affection for you which can never cease but with my life.

I had resided two years with Lady Norton, when Lady Caroline Benson, who came to spend a few weeks

weeks with her, took a great liking to me, and invited me to come and live with her. I immediately accepted her invitation, as I was ashamed of remaining so long burthensome to Lady Mary, who promised me, on my leaving her, the continuance of her friendship; and had the goodness to tell Lady Caroline that I was the daughter of a friend of her's, tho' she never was acquainted with my real name or rank in life. Death, however, has thought proper to deprive me of her protection; I have therefore no friends now, except you, my Julia, and Lady Caroline; and whenever she marries I must leave her, as I should not choose to live with a married lady.

I have now been six years from Spain, during all which time I have neither seen nor heard of any of my friends or relations, nor received the least intelligence whether my mother be living or dead.

Thus, my dear Julia, I have opened my whole heart to you without the least reserve: let me intreat you, however, never to drop the least hint in any of your future letters respecting my real name or rank in life, as I wish to forget who I am, or that I ever was any other than your

Affectionate friend,
JEMIMA MEADOWS.

LETTER XXI.

Miss Thornton to Miss Meadows.

GRACIOUS Heaven, what has not my friend Jemima suffered! what hath she not gone through! Surely, surely, the Marchioness must long ere this have relented, and perhaps at this time is wishing for your return. As to the part you have acted, my dear, instead of condemning I admire your conduct. How few in a similar situation would have demeaned themselves with so much prudence and propriety as you have

have done ! In short, I am equally amazed at your resolution and fortitude, and must say that it required the spirit and perseverance of *Jemima* to bear up against such distress. But I am called away, and must therefore conclude by assuring my dear Lady *Jemima* of the unalterable affection of her

JULIA THORNTON.

LETTER XXII.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

Dear Ned,

YOUR last letter has at length awakened my reason. Ah ! my friend, spite of all your friendly cautions, Sir Walter Warren found means to entice me to the gaming-table, which he never would suffer me to leave till my pockets were entirely emptied. Though I made the strongest resolutions to the contrary, yet, under the mask of friendship, he was never easy except when I was present : for this reason I was sure every morning to receive invitations to dinner ; and if these failed, I was inveigled to supper under the pretence of his having some agreeable news to communicate. This news was commonly what luck he had enjoyed the night before at the gaming-table, and which never failed to tempt me to visit it the following evening, when perhaps I won a few guineas : but I was as certain to lose them the next night, with the addition of treble the sum. By this means I found my ready money exhausted, and myself involved in debts of honour to a very considerable amount.

The anguish of mind which I experienced from the difficulties in which I had involved myself by this imprudent conduct is indescribable, as I now found myself thereby totally unable to discharge some just debts which I had contracted.

In this dilemma what was to be done? To ask my father, I was equally afraid and ashamed: to borrow of my sister, and by that means distress her, I could not think of, neither did I imagine she had so large a sum in her possession as I was in want of: to distress a friend I was equally unwilling; and though I was certain you would have assisted me, yet after neglecting your friendly advice and precaution, my pride would not suffer me to apply to you. At length I resolved to solicit my mother's assistance. That tender parent immediately procured me the money I wanted; but though she scarcely asked what occasion I had for so large a sum, I could plainly see astonishment depicted in her countenance; and I have too much reason to believe that she guessed the true cause of my distress, as she took occasion to inveigh bitterly against gaming that very evening. On my receiving the cash I instantly paid all my debts of honour, as they are foolishly termed, and took a most solemn oath never more to touch a card or dice in any gaming-house whatever.

As soon as Sir Walter heard that I had discharged my debts, he sent me an invitation to dinner. Upon receiving my excuse for declining the invitation, he soon after waited upon me in person to request my company in the evening to Brookes's. This I also refused, telling him, that I proposed to dedicate the short time I should spend in town before the holidays to my friends; and finding me resolute, he at length left me. But I will now endeavour to strike out a more entertaining subject.

My father and mother talk of leaving London in a week's time, and have engaged a large party to spend the Christmas holidays with them. Among the females are Lady Caroline Benson and Lady Clara Fitzgerald, the latter of whom, I believe, my friends design for my *cara sposa*. Miss Meadows (who, by the bye, I have scarcely set eyes upon lately) is also invited;

vited; but I am not certain that she will accept the invitation. If she does, and I most devoutly pray that she will, all the charms of the other females will not eclipse the superior beauties of the lovely *Jemima*.

I am just going to Lady *Caroline's*, when I hope to see Miss *Meadows*, as well as to hear of her acquiescence with my mother's request. As to Lady *Clara Fitzgerald*, I really believe, vanity apart, she will not refuse me whenever I am disposed to offer myself, as she takes every opportunity to throw herself in my way; so much so indeed, that it scarcely escapes the notice of any one.

This month, however, will determine the fate of thy friend; and though these giddy forward women are not altogether adapted to my taste, yet if Lady *Clara* continues to honour me with the same flattering attentions she has hitherto shewn me, I shall, I fear, very soon become **BENEDICT THE MARRIED MAN**.

Yours sincerely,

HENRY BELVILLE.

LETTER XXIII.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

MY dear *Julia* has frequently asked me to pay a visit to her: if it will not prove inconvenient, I am now ready and willing, in consequence of the following unexpected incident, to accept of your and Mr. *Thornton's* obliging invitation.

You must know, that Lady *Caroline* dined yesterday at Mr. *Belville's*, where I was also invited, but declined going. On her Ladyship's return home, she told me, that she was commissioned by Mr. and Mrs. *Belville* to invite me to spend the Christmas holidays at *Belville-Hall* with herself and Lady *Clara Fitzgerald*. Think, my dear, what were my feelings at that moment. I felt my colour come and go; but mustering
up

up all my recollection, I replied, that I was much obliged to Mr. and Mrs. Belville, but with her Ladyship's permission I would pay Miss Thornton a visit during her absence. "Certainly, my dear, you are at liberty to do as you please." I shall therefore, my dear Julia, only wait your answer to prepare for my little journey.

Were I to attend her Ladyship to Belville-Hall, it would certainly be one of the greatest follies I could commit. To live under the same roof with a man I have taken every possible method to shun whilst in town, would be absurd, as, be the party ever so numerous, I could not always avoid him. As to Lady Clara Fitzgerald, she is quite in raptures to think she shall be so near her charming Colonel, as she always calls him. I had a visit from her Ladyship this morning, and as I believe it will not prove unentertaining, shall relate our conversation.

I was sitting in my dressing-room when she entered, quite out of breath, and, not giving me time to speak, exclaimed, "Lord, my dear, what do you think?"

"Indeed, I don't know, my Lady."

"Why, child, I am perfectly expiring with joy. I yesterday received an invitation to spend the holidays at the charming Belville's!"

"Is that all my Lady?"

"That all! Why, you little insensible thing, was you not as overjoyed when Lady Caroline gave you their obliging message?"

"Yes, my Lady, so much so, that I immediately refused it."

"Refused it! Impossible! Surely you intend to go! Well, I am amazed at your want of taste!"

"Why, my dear Miss Meadows, you are the only woman who knows the Colonel that is not dying for him."

Aye, thought I, if you knew my heart, I am not far short of it indeed, my Lady. "I think it a hap-

" pines that I am not, as your Ladyship has taken
 " care to have him all to yourself."

" Well, now, but do you really think that Belville
 " has any regard for me?"

" Why, indeed, my Lady, I can't judge, as I
 " have not been in Mr. Belville's company lately ;
 " but common report has given you to each other ;
 " and scarcely a day passes without a paragraph in
 " the papers concerning Colonel B ——— and
 " Lady C. F ———."

" Ha! ha! ha! now that is delightful, because
 " it gives one so much consequence in the world, and
 " makes all the women envy one!"

" Heavens, my Lady! can you wish to be the
 " talk of every fashionable tea-table, and to have your
 " name hackneyed in every newspaper in town!"

I could not help speaking this with a tone and man-
 ner which plainly indicated my disgust at such a giddy
 speech; for I am willing to believe that extreme giddi-
 ness alone makes her Ladyship act and talk in the
 manner she does. But to proceed.

" Lord, my dear, you are so grave, there is no
 " talking to you! There is no living without a little
 " scandal; and they that talk about others must expect
 " a little in return!"

" Good Heavens! my Lady, I hope you don't fa-
 " bricate scandal."

" No, I don't absolutely invent it, but I am some-
 " times the first to publish it. Why, there was Lord
 " Brooke, who discovered an intrigue between his lady
 " and Capt. St. George; to be sure I was the first to
 " make it known (as I was one of the first that heard
 " it) at Lady Moore's last public breakfast, where I
 " told the news, and, consequently, it was half thro'
 " the town before the evening. Lord, child! you
 " know nothing of fashionable life."

" No, nor never desire it, if that be fashionable
 " life."

" Well,

" Well, my dear, but if you will give me your address, I will employ all my leisure moments, whilst at the Hall, in writing to you."

I returned her Ladyship many thanks for her kind condescension, which really pleases me much, as by that means I shall hear how matters go on; after telling her, therefore, that I would procure some franks from Sir John Dudley, she took her leave. But I am just informed he is below, and therefore will finish this at my return. Adieu!

IN CONTINUATION.

GOOD Heavens, my dear! how have I been alarmed! I told you that I was going down to Sir John Dudley, who the servants informed me was below; but on entering the parlour, guess my surprize to see Colonel Belville instead of Sir John. I started, and, am afraid, turned pale; at the same time saying, " I beg pardon, Sir, I was told that Sir John Dudley was here."

" Happy Sir John!" exclaimed Belville, at the same time advancing, " to be thus honoured by the attention of Miss Meadows."

While he was paying me this compliment, he had taken my hand; and having by this time recovered myself, I replied with a smile, " I presume Sir John won't think very highly of the honour, as it is only to trouble him for some franks."

" And may I not be permitted to take that trouble, as Miss Meadows is pleased to style it?"

" I thank you, Sir," returned I, with as gay an air as I could assume, " but I shall affront Sir John by receiving them from any other Member;" for, to tell you the truth, my dear Julia, I did not chuse to be obliged to Belville even for so trifling a thing as a few franks. He said no more, but again taking my hand, which I had withdrawn, " I am sorry, Madam, we

“ are not to enjoy the pleasure of your company at the
“ Hall.”

“ I should have been extremely happy, Sir, to have
“ accepted the honour intended me by Mr. and Mrs.
“ Belville, but I am going to see a friend to whom I
“ have long promised a visit.”

“ That friend, perhaps, has a ——— But pardon
“ me, Miss Meadows, I am too inquisitive.”

At that moment Sir John fortunately came to my relief: he stopped at the door, at the same time saying, “ I hope I don’t intrude.”

“ Not at all, Sir, as it was you I came to seek.
“ Will you do me the favour to frank those covers for me ?” And having said this, I abruptly left the room.

How mysterious is Belville’s behaviour ! What could he mean by saying, “ Perhaps that friend has a ——— ” and then pausing ? I am quite at a loss to guess his meaning ; however, be it what it will, I shall take more pains than ever to avoid him during the short time he stays in town. By the time he returns (which can’t be very long, as he has lately been elected to parliament,) he will either be married, or at least going to be married. But I will say no more about him.

Mr. Darcy has again done me the honour to solicit my hand ; but I have again declined his offer, as I am determined, in spite of my dependent state, never to give my hand without my heart.

I am called to dinner ; and as I am going to an assembly in the evening, shall have no opportunity to add more at present, than that if my company will prove in the least inconvenient, I beg you will tell me so. I remain my dear Julia’s sincere friend,

JEMIMA M ———

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

Miss Thornton to Miss Meadows.

WELCOME, welcome, thrice welcome, my dear Jemima, to your Julia! With what pleasure did I read the contents of your last letter! I flew instantly to my father, who appeared almost as overjoyed as myself, and we shall count the days, and even minutes, till your arrival. My next beloved friend to your charming self, Miss Walpole, also waits with impatience to see you; therefore the sooner my dear Jemima comes the better.

I don't know what Colonel Belville could mean by "Perhaps that friend has a —," except it was a brother that he was afraid of; but tell him he need not be alarmed, as there is none here worthy of my Jemima; for, in spite of all the gay Lady Clara's arts and attractions, I can't help thinking he prefers you.

I am not a little pleased that you are to be honoured with the lively correspondence of her Ladyship, as that will in some measure divert your time here, which I am afraid my friend will find hang heavy on her hands, after being so long accustomed to a London life.

We have a few genteel families near us, amongst whom are a Sir Thomas Glendore and lady, with their son and daughter. By the bye, I fear the young 'squire will leave all us country lasses for the *Town Lady* when she appears; and the mischief of it is, that we shall find it a difficult matter to regain him. Well, no matter! Come, my dear, and by your placid appearance among the beaux teach us to imitate the example. Adieu, my ever dear Jemima!

And believe me,

Sincerely yours,

JULIA THORNTON.

LETTER XXV.

Captain Hillgrove to Colonel Belville.

Dear Henry,

YOUR last letter has made me extremely happy ; for though it confirmed the justice of those apprehensions which I had so much dreaded, yet the oath you have so sensibly as well as judiciously imposed upon yourself, leaves me no cause to fear a relapse : I will therefore forbear to press you any farther on a subject, the recollection of which must prove painful to you.

As to Lady Clara's *penchant* towards you, it is certainly no *secret*, since it has already travelled to this remote distance from the gay world ; for Wilson's brother, who arrived here last night, told us that her Ladyship's partiality for you was too visible and marked to escape the notice of the most unobserving eye. How can you then, Harry, desert a fine young creature who is over-head-and-ears in love with you, and who, besides personal charms, has the additional recommendation of fortune and rank, for a woman who perhaps entertains not the smallest partiality in your favour. It is true, I daily hear both of Miss Meadows' beauty of person and accomplishment of mind ; but then it is as constantly added, that her heart is extremely cold and insensible. For my part, I have seen neither of the ladies, and therefore cannot decide on the superiority of their respective claims.

I am rejoiced, however, to hear that Lady Clara will spend some time at the Hall, and am mischievous enough to wish that Miss Meadows may not accompany her.

Miss Dunbar has left us, to my great mortification : however, she is to return in the summer, as she is a great favourite of the Miss Burtons. Indeed all the old

old party begin to move off, but every day brings an accession of new company. I frequently talk of taking my leave too; but all in vain, as Sir Charles will not yet, he says, suffer me to go. I intend, however, to pay you a short visit, by way of seeing Lady Clara, if not Miss Meadows; till when believe me

Yours, as usual,

EDWARD HILMGROVE.

L E T T E R XXVI.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

I WAS not much delighted to learn from your last, that Lady Clara and myself are become the common talk of the Town, as it is vulgarly termed; neither was I very well pleased with the slight disparaging manner in which you spoke of Miss Meadows: however you will not see her at Belville Hall, as she has promised to spend the summer with a friend, and where she proposes to remain till Lady Caroline's return to town, long before which time I fancy I shall be *irrecoverably lost*, as the gay men of the Ton call us when we commence husbands.

I told you in my last letter that I was going to call upon Lady Caroline, who in the course of my visit took an opportunity of telling me that Miss Meadows was not at home, and that she begged to decline my father and mother's invitation. The next day called again; and while I was waiting for her Ladyship, Miss Meadows entered the room. She turned pale, I thought, on seeing me, and in apparent confusion said, that the servant had told her Sir John Dudley was in the parlour. After having endeavoured to relieve her from her embarrassment by some commonplace compliments, I expressed my concern at having been informed that she had declined the invitation to Belville Hall; when she replied in polite but cold terms, that she was very sensible of the honour intended her,

but that she was engaged to a friend, to whom she had long promised a visit. Sir John soon after entering the room, she quitted it, when he immediately asked if Miss Meadows accompanied Lady Caroline to my father's; and upon my replying in the negative, he seemed rather surprised: the entrance of Lady Caroline, however, put an end to farther enquiry on his part, and the conversation took a general turn.

This is Tuesday, and next Thursday we set off for Belville Hall, where I hope soon to see you. My friends tell me that I am grown more grave and sedate than I used to be; all which is laid to the account of my violent love for Lady Clara. I permit them to remain in their error, as I do not think it worth my while to contradict it. I am just going to pay her Ladyship a visit; and therefore shall not close this till my return.

Tuesday Evening.

As soon as I had finished the above, I proceeded to the Earl of Baltimore's, and was immediately ushered into Lady Clara's dressing-room. As the servant opened the door, I heard Miss Meadows exclaim in a voice that plainly indicated her perturbation, "I would not have your Ladyship see it for the world?"

"What is the matter, Ladies?" cried I, stopping short at the entrance of the room. The sound of my voice startled both parties, especially Miss Meadows, who looked very much confused, and who, while Lady Clara ran towards me, hastily put something into her pocket.

"Lord, Mr. Belville! do you know, Jemima has the prettiest miniature of some gentleman, and yet she won't let me see it."

"Cruel, indeed, my Lady! Pray, who is this favoured lover of Miss Meadows?"

"It is no favoured lover at all—indeed"—(answered she, trembling) "it is—it is—it is only—only a favourite friend of mine in the country."

"I will

"I will be hang'd, then, *Jemima*; for there never can be so handsome a face in the country! It was for all the world like yours, Colonel," continued the giddy *Lady Clara*.

I bowed, and could not forbear smiling at the compliment. "I am much obliged to your Ladyship, but cannot suppose it so striking as you say, if it resembles me."

"O! it is only that I know *Miss Meadows* hates you, or I should have been positive that it was you."

"*Miss Meadows* hate me, my Lady! What have

"I done, Madam, (turning to *Miss Meadows*) thus to incur your displeasure?"

"Lord! *Lady Clara*, how you talk! I never told you I hated *Mr. Belville*. Surely, if every one don't view the Colonel with your Ladyship's eyes, it does not follow that they must of course hate him."

With these words she left the room; nor could any thing that *Lady Clara* said or urged, induce her to join us again.

I tried, but in vain, to bring this giddy woman to an explanation. She flew from me after her "dear *Jemima*," as she called her, to implore her forgiveness.

How to construe her Ladyship's words I am ignorant; neither can I form the slightest conjecture for *Miss Meadows'* hatred of me. Certain it is, that she has carefully avoided me ever since she first saw me; but why she has done so, I am totally unable to divine: in short, the more I think, the more I am puzzled, as I am not conscious of having ever offended her.

I am called to dinner, and must therefore conclude as usual,

HENRY BELVILLE.

✉ I shall not write again before I leave town.

LETTER

HISTORY OF

LETTER XXVII.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

WHAT a scene, my dear Julia! How has that giddy Lady Clara provoked me? — But to be explicit.

You must know, that conceiving your curiosity might be gratified by a sight of Belville's picture, I determined to attempt, and accordingly finished it on Sunday last. On the following Tuesday I went to pay a morning-visit to Lady Clara Fitzgerald; and happening to speak of a glover who sold excellent gloves, I took out my pocket-book to give her his card, when, to my great vexation, the picture unluckily dropped from it. She was going to catch it up, saying, "Lord, how handsome!" but I was too nimble, and seized it first: a scuffle ensued, when, just as I was nearly overpowered, Mr. Belville fortunately entered the room; for she instantly quitted me, flew to him, and exhibited her complaint against me for refusing her the sight of "the prettiest picture she had ever seen."

"Who is this favoured lover, Miss Meadows?" interrogated Belville, turning to me.

I stammered out, that it was a friend of mine in the country; when Lady Clara exclaimed, "No, that it is not; for it is for all the world like you, Colonel. Only that I knew Jemima hates you, or I should have been positive that it was you."

"Heavens! (returned Belville, with the utmost surprize) what can I have done to incur Miss Meadows' hatred?"

For my part, I was so provoked, that instantly quitting my seat, I said something severe to Lady Clara, and left the room, spite of all her entreaties to the contrary.

I went home very much chagrined, whither I was soon followed by her Ladyship, who flew into the room, hastily

hastily exclaiming, " I hope, my dear Jemima, you are not seriously angry with me."

" I have no right certainly, my Lady, in the situation I am placed, to be offended at any freedom you are pleased to take with me ; yet, I must own, I don't wish to appear ridiculous." I said this in a tone which plainly indicated that I felt myself hurt ; upon which, advancing towards me, and taking my hand, she very tenderly said, " Pray, my dear Jemima, don't be angry with me ; I meant no harm, indeed : only tell me how, and I am willing instantly to repair my fault."

" That is impossible, my Lady. All I request of you now is, that you will take no farther notice of the affair."

She assured me that she would not ; and added, that she would inform Belville, what she had said was her own invention. After replying that she might act as she pleased, I instantly dropped the subject.

In the course of our conversation, she told me she was going to the Dutchess of Douglas's rout in the evening, and very politely requested me to accompany her. I answered, that I did not know whether Lady Caroline might not wish me to be of her party ; if she did not, that I would attend her Ladyship. She then said she would wait till Lady Caroline came home, and who, soon after returning, desired me by no means to confine myself on her account. After having dressed, I went home with Lady Clara to dinner, during which she was all life and spirits ; and I passed the time very agreeably till the evening, when we proceeded to the Dutchess of Douglass's, where we found an equally numerous and brilliant assembly. Lady Clara soon entered into conversation with the company about her ; when a gentleman advancing, and bowing to her with great obsequiousness and respect, said, I hope I see your Ladyship well."

" Perfectly

“ Perfectly so, I thank your Lordship. How does
 “ your Lady ? Is not she here ? O la ! no, now I
 “ think on’t, she’s gone to Bath. I wonder, my Lord,
 “ you did not attend her.”

“ Indeed, my Lady, I don’t understand you. Lady
 “ Mary is not gone to Bath.”

“ Lord bless me ! how people will talk !”

“ What, my Lady ! Pray explain yourself.”

“ No, excuse me, my Lord ; it will only make you
 “ angry.”

“ Nothing your Ladyship can say will produce that
 “ effect : therefore, pray let me know what your
 “ Ladyship alludes to.”

“ Why then, my Lord,” (whispering, though loud
 enough for every person around her to hear) “ why
 “ then, you must know, that this morning I had a
 “ visit from Lady Granville, who told me, that Lady
 “ Mary had such a run of ill-luck at Lady Rivers’s
 “ rout last night, that, to avoid your Lordship’s an-
 “ ger, she set off for Bath early this morning. Now,
 “ was ever any thing so scandalous ?”

“ O ! (replied his Lordship, in a careless manner)
 “ people will talk ; witness the scandalous reports they
 “ raise of your Ladyship.”

So saying, he walked away ; when a young Lady
 came running up, at the same time calling out, “ My
 “ dear Lady Clara, how d’ye do ? Have you heard
 “ the news ?”

“ Lord ! no, my dear Lady Frances ; what is it ?”

“ O lud ! you never heard any thing so foolish. They
 “ say, that Mr. Belville devotes all his time and for-
 “ tune to an Opera-girl. Did you ever suspect him
 “ to be capable of such folly ?

“ What more ?” cried Lady Clara, with the great-
 est *sang-froid* imaginable.

“ Why, indeed, I don’t know any more, except that
 “ it is said also, he only intends to marry you for your
 “ fortune.”

“ That

"That will be one thing, I make no doubt," replied Lady Clara, with the same indifference.

"Well, I do declare, my dear, I never saw any body like you; there's no such thing as making you angry.—But haven't you heard what they say of Miss Meadows, Lady Caroline Benson's companion?"

You will easily believe that my surprise and attention were not a little excited by this interrogation: Lady Clara, however, significantly looking at me, appeared to say, "Take no notice."

"Well, Lady Frances, what of her?"

"Why, they say that the Colonel is very desirous of having her as his mistress; but it seems she bears such a good character, that he is afraid of offering her *his protection*. Nay, Lord Bradley assured me, that accidentally calling the other morning at Lady Caroline's, as he passed the parlour door he saw the Colonel with Miss Meadows's hand in his."

"Indeed! surprising! And would your Ladyship wish me to be jealous of the Colonel and Miss Meadows from such a circumstance as that? Surely your Ladyship cannot be serious, nor suppose that if Mr. Belville marries me, I shall prohibit his touching any woman's hand but my own."

"Well, Lord, you are so easy!"—Then, making a curtsy, away tripped Lady Frances.

We soon afterwards left the room; and as we passed Lady Frances, I heard her say, "Lord! is it possible!"

As we were driving home, I took occasion to express my amazement at the scandalous reports I had heard circulated in such a short space of time.

"Lord bless you, my dear, (replied Lady Clara) this must surely convince you, that there is no living without a little scandal; since you are now sensible that even your character is not exempted from it. Every syllable of Lady Frances' intelligence originated in revenge for what I had said to Lord

"Kingsley

“Kingsley concerning his Lady; for Lady Frances is
“a relation of his Lordship.”

On my return home, I entertained Lady Caroline with my comments on the texts of the several scandal-mongers I had heard during the evening, which diverted her exceedingly; and then, wishing her a good night, retired to my chamber.

And now, my dear Julia, what do you think could give rise to such a report as Belville's being in love with me, and wanting me for a mistress? Well, I find I have been egregiously mistaken in supposing that my situation was too numble to be thought worthy the honour of being scandalized.

I had almost forgot to tell you, that I have lately had no less than a Colonel in the Guards, a Captain in the Militia, and a Right Honourable Baronet, enroll themselves among the list of my admirers; viz. Colonel Moleworth, who is handsome and well-bred; Captain Greville, who is a great fop, ever ready to oblige the fair sex, and thinks himself too irresistible to be refused; and Sir Cecil Mowbray, who is rather handsome, with a large estate, but a great rake, and who vows that I am the first woman of whom he ever thought seriously in his life. However, I have had fortitude enough to resist the whole Triumvirate. Lady Caroline was this morning reckoning up the number and rank of my different lovers as follows: Three Baronets, two Colonels, one Captain, and one *simple* Esquire; and yet, from all these, my dear Julia, I am unable to select a husband, though they all vow to teize me while I continue single.

Mr. and Mrs. Belville with the Colonel leave London to-morrow morning. Miss Belville is to accompany Lady Caroline and Lady Clara to Belville Hall on Sunday next, when your friend proposes to set off for The Wood; after which you may hourly expect to see, in her Ladyship's post-chaise,

Your own

JEMIMA MEADOWS.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

Sir John Dudley to Sir Charles Wilmot.

WELL, Charles, here I am still; tho' scarcely one of my acquaintance is left in town, as they are all gone into the country to keep their holidays.

Yesterday morning Miss Meadows set off for The Wood, and will not return to town till the latter end of January. For my part, I am detained in London, in hourly expectation of the arrival of Lord Molton, my friend and patron. In the last letter I received from him he tells me that he shall be in England in a few days, and that he should then make me acquainted with the story of my birth. What he means by this I am entirely ignorant, as I always believed myself to be the son of an honest country 'Squire; at least so my Lord always told me. Just before he quitted this country, he procured me a Baronetcy; and after settling an handsome annuity upon me, left me with this injunction, Never to marry till he had first seen the lady; at the same time adding, that he did not wish to confine my choice to a woman of rank or great fortune, but that he had particular reasons for seeing the lady I might fix on. Since this time I have never seen him, though it is more than four years ago. He has written to me frequently, and often remitted me money, tho' I have repeatedly assured him, that I had no occasion for such additional marks of his kindness and generosity. I am not a little anxious for his arrival, you will easily suppose, as I shall then hope to have these mysteries explained to the satisfaction of

Yours,

JOHN DUDLEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXIX.

*Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.**Dear Ned,**Belville-Hall.*

AT last we are all safely arrived without either accident or adventure. The country appears very dull, and even my father and mother expect their guests with impatience. For my part, I am very little in the house, spending most of my time in the park and gardens. My father and mother are continually teasing me to know what is the reason of my thus secluding myself from society. All they can extract from me, however, is a smile.

Well, if I do marry Lady Clara, I shall not expect to be overpowered with the sweets of domestic happiness; at least not till she has had her full swing of bridal parade.

She is undoubtedly possessed of every requisite of a modern woman of quality; viz. rank, riches, and beauty; and that she loves me, is equally certain; at least for the present: but how long that love will continue, is not quite so certain. However, as she is the only woman next to Miss Meadows whom I esteem, and as I am thoroughly assured of her love, (which by the bye she has sufficiently published to all the world) I intend to make her an offer of my hand soon after her arrival here.

Thus, my friend, you are acquainted with all my designs. As to what Lady Clara said about Miss Meadows' hating me, she explained that circumstance before I left town—that is, as much as her Ladyship could—by observing—But hark! I hear the sound of carriages, and must therefore conclude in haste,

Yours,

HENRY BELVILLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

Miss Walpole to Miss Dunbar.

My dear Mary,

The Cottage.

THIS morning arrived at The Wood Miss Meadows: I was with Miss Thornton when she was introduced into the parlour. With what pleasure did these affectionate friends meet! After mutual salutations and congratulations on both sides, Julia presented her charming friend to me. Never in my life did I behold any thing so lovely, joined with so much affability and sweetness!

Mr. Thornton soon after joined us; and the usual compliments having passed, we sat down to dinner, which had waited some time. During our repast Miss Meadows entertained us with some curious London anecdotes; and soon after tea I took my leave, as Miss Meadows complained of fatigue.

Sir Thomas Glendore has a great deal of company at his house at present, so that I must begin to live more private, or I shall be discovered; and though it is very indifferent to me who knows my retreat, yet I do not chuse to be seen, as I should then be pestered with questions I should not like to answer. As to seeing Walsingham again, I fear that event will never happen. I am now too tired to proceed, but shall not close this till I have again seen Miss Meadows; till then adieu.

Tuesday Morn.

I WAS this morning agreeably surprised by a visit from Miss Thornton and her fair friend, though very dearly had I like to have purchased the pleasure of it.

During breakfast the discourse again turning upon London, Julia asked her friend, who were deemed the smartest young fellows of the *Ton*, as well as what
young

young men of fashion were most respected and esteemed for their prudence, good sense, and sobriety?

“That’s a difficult question; (replied Miss Meadows) but the only three who are remarkably grave and sober, are Sir William Palmer, (whom I believe I have never mentioned) Mr. Darcy, and Mr. Walsingham.”

Only think what I felt at the sound of the last-mentioned name! I could scarcely keep my seat, while tears started into my eyes. I tried to turn off my apparent distress with a laugh, saying, I had scalded myself with the tea; and having mustered up all the resolution I was mistress of, asked Miss Meadows if any of the gentlemen were married?

“Not to my knowledge. I am certain two of them are not; but of Mr. Walsingham I know very little; though I don’t think he is, or I should have heard of it.”

The tea equipage being removed, we walked into the garden, it being a fine frosty day; but so depressed were my spirits, that I was obliged to complain of a sudden head-ach, in order to hasten the departure of my company. This feint produced the desired effect, and my friends immediately took their leave.

Walsingham returned to England!—and passes for a single man!—Good Heavens! what a deceitful sex! Ah! my dear Mary, never confide in any of them. You see that, notwithstanding all the respect with which Captain Hillgrove treated you, he permitted you to leave him without avowing any particular affection for you. Be assured, that the men in this respect are all alike; therefore follow my advice, and trust none of the faithless deluders.

Adieu, my dear Mary, and

Believe yours sincerely,

EMMA WALPOLE.

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

*Lady Clara Fitzgerald to Miss Meadows.**Belville-Hall.*

HERE I am, my dear Jemima, in the same house with the charming Belville, and a numerous party of both sexes. Never did I pass my time more agreeably! We spend our mornings as we think proper, either in romping, reading, or walking; our evenings in cards, dancing, company, &c. Here are a great many pretty women, yet does the delightful Belville leave them all for me: he chats with me, sings with me, dances with me, and, in short, is always by my side.

O my dear, what do you think? We have got one of your new lovers here; and what's more, he would be very glad to change you for me, if he thought he had any chance; but he has none in the least at present; for I would not change Belville even for the Prince of Wales. But, Lord! I have not told you his name; it is Sir Cecil Mowbray. You know he loves all our sex, and he may do well enough, my dear Jem', to while the time away after we are married, as he is really a very pretty fellow: if my *Caro Sposo*, therefore, should chance to fall into a fit of the dumps, I will send for Sir Cecil, and then we can have a comfortable game at *All-Fours*, or a little talk about scandal.—Apropos, do you know I have not heard one scandalous anecdote since I have been here? I must invent a little soon, or I shall die with the vapours.

Hey-day! “Mr. Belville’s compliments, and begs to speak with your Ladyship.”—Lord, child, let him come in! What’s the man afraid of?—Adieu.

MY

MY dear, dear Jemima, I shall expire with joy ! The sweet, the angelic Belville, has been to inform me of his love, and *all that*. Lud, my dear, even *you* would have laugh'd to have seen him ! So many hums and ha's, I thought he would have been choaked ; so that I was forced to help him out at last. But when *it* did stammer out *its* wishes, and *its* hopes, and *its* fears, and *all that sort of thing*, and I gave him my consent, I thought the dear fellow would have devoured me.

Every thing is to be prepared as soon as possible after we arrive in town, when your happy Clara will soon change her name to that of Belville.

Oh Jemima ! I've not written so much these hundred years ; I must therefore make haste to conclude, or be forced to ring for some drops to dispel the vapours. Pray let me have a long letter of congratulations, chidings, and so forth, and be sure not to forget to let me know how many lovers you have got.—Adieu, my dear Jemima !

Yours,
CLARA FITZGERALD.



LETTER XXXII.

Colonel Belville to Captain Hillgrove.

WELL, Ned, I have made a formal declaration of love to Lady Clara, and was most graciously received. All my friends approve my choice, except my demure and wise Aunt, who prophesies that they as well as myself will live to repent it. But I don't wonder at my Aunt's disliking her Ladyship, who is always railing at old maids, and says, they want every young lady to follow their example.

I wish, Ned, you would leave your friends, and make one of the happy party at Belville-Hall ; for I want a friend to whom I can pour out my whole soul. That

That coxcomb Sir Cecil Mowbray is with us, and takes many improper freedoms, in my opinion, with my wife elect. I expect Walsingham to morrow; but he won't stay with us long, as he is going to the Wood, to see Sir Thomas Glendore.

I am interrupted; therefore adieu for the present.

Yours,

HENRY BELVILLE.

L E T T E R . XXXIII.

Miss Meadows to Lady Clara Fitzgerald.

I Received my dear Lady Clara's lively epistle yesterday, and present her with the congratulations she calls for most sincerely, heartily wishing her every happiness with her dear Colonel Belville.

I am extremely concerned that egregious sop Sir Cecil Mowbray is one of your party, though I think too highly of Lady Clara's good-sense to suppose she will ever select such a man as Sir Cecil to *badiner* with after her marriage with Mr. Belville: on the contrary, I flatter myself that she and the Colonel will exhibit a pattern of conjugal and domestic felicity to all the young married persons of quality. I trust my dear Lady Clara will excuse me for thus obtruding my advice, especially when she recollects that she insisted on having my opinion on every thing she should write.

In answer to your Ladyship's enquiry of what new lovers I have got, my reply is very concise, "None at all:" however, I do not despair, as Sir Thomas Glendore's family, who reside here, expect a swarm of London beaux to accompany their son, who is daily expected; and I hope you will not deem me either vain or unreasonable in my expectation of having one at least to my share. Thus your Ladyship sees I am not in any danger of dying with the vapours, as you were pleased to prognosticate before we left town.

The

The neighbourhood around highly esteem my good friends the Thorntons, whom I am this evening to accompany to a ball, at a Mr. Carey's; and as she must be sensible that some previous preparations are indispensibly necessary on such an occasion, I know my dear Lady Clara will excuse my thus breaking off abruptly, and subscribing myself her Ladyship's

Obedient humble servant,

JEMIMA MEADOWS.

LETTER XXXIV.

Lady Caroline Benson to Miss Meadows.

My dear Jemima,

Belville-Hall.

I AM almost expiring with the spleen! Belville, who is now irrecoverably lost to me, and every other woman, except Lady Clara Fitzgerald, has left us for a few days to attend his Aunt Miss Margaret Belville to her brother's.

Lady Clara was at first quite low-spirited on the occasion. Sir Cecil Mowbray, however, has exerted all his powers of pleasing to amuse and entertain her; and to my great astonishment she seems not unwilling to listen to him.

The Colonel proposes bringing a friend of his (a Captain Hillgrove) back with him. Mr. Walsingham is at the Hall, and I fancy Belville has left his *Cara Spesa* elect under his care; her Ladyship, however, can't bear him, and says he looks more like a Father-Confessor than a gay young gentleman. For my part, I think he is a very pretty fellow; but he too pines in secret for some ungrateful fair.

Why or wherefore it happens I do not know, but certain it is that I am taken very little notice of here at present. Indeed, I must confess that I have lost a great share of my former vivacity; and were it not for the company of Matilda Belville, I should not be able to dispense with that of my dear Jemima.

Pray,

Pray, can you inform me whether Sir John Dudley has left town or not? He said he could not, on account of his daily expectation of his patron, Lord Moulton. I believe you have never seen that nobleman. I knew him long before I had the pleasure of being acquainted with Dudley, and flatter myself that I was a favourite of his Lordship's.

Do not omit, my dear, to present my compliments to Mr. Thornton and his daughter, and inform them that I shall come to take you from them at the expiration of the destined month; till which time I bid you, most sincerely and affectionately, adieu!

CAROLINE BENSON.

L E T T E R XXXV.

Miss Walpole to Miss Dunbar.

THIS friend of Miss Thornton, my dear Mary, will give me cause, I fear, to regret her arrival, by entirely ruining that peace of mind which I had almost so happily attained. I was yesterday at The Wood, when Miss Meadows received a letter from Lady Caroline Benson, part of which she read aloud. You have heard of the Belville family, I dare say; as likewise that the Colonel is shortly to be married to Lady Clara Fitzgerald. This lady is now on a visit at the Hall, together with Lady Caroline. In one part of the letter her Ladyship says, "Mr. Belville is gone home with his aunt, and proposes bringing Captain Hillgrove back with him. Walsingham is at the Hall, and I believe the Colonel has left his intended *Cara Sposa* elect under his care: her Ladyship, however, can't bear him. For my part, I think him a very pretty fellow; but he too sighs in secret for some ungrateful fair."

All this Miss Meadows read aloud. What is the meaning of Walsingham's sighing in secret, I know

not ; neither can I conjecture the cause of his looking grave ; time, however, which develops every mystery, will bring this to light. Adieu !

EMMA WALPOLE.

LETTER XXXVI.

Lady Clara Fitzgerald to Miss Meadows.

O DEAR ! O dear ! I never heard the like !— There Mrs. Belville, with her spectacles in her hand, cries, “ Dear Lady Clara, how can you be so “ giddy ?” If I go into another room, there I am received by Lady Caroline Benson with a “ Fye, Lady “ Clara ! how can you permit Sir Cecil to take such “ liberties, when you are so soon to be married to Bel- “ ville ?” And if I go up stairs, there I find a long letter of advice from Miss Meadows ; and all for what ? The old lady lectures me for my liveliness and spirit ; the young lady because she envies me ; and Miss Meadows (though I believe with the best intentions of the three) because I speak to any man besides my spouse-elect. Now, I am sure, were I to bring these several complaints before a Court of Justice, I should be acquitted of every one of them, take my word for it.

Heavens ! Belville and his friend are just arrived. Away goes my pen—

Thursday Evening.

WELL, my dear, here I am ! Belville is come, and I am once—more—hap—py. Apropos, now I am talking of happiness, so—we are—to be—“ pat- “ terns—of—conjugal and domestic felicity—for all “ —the young married—persons of quality.”—Heavens ! child, what an old-maidish supposition ! But enough of this ; for I am almost sick of the thoughts of Ma—tri—mo—ny.

I flew to Belville, who received me in a very husband-like manner, and after presenting me to his friend
Captain

Captain Hillgrove, went to enquire after the health of the rest of the family. As to the Captain, he watched me very narrowly the whole day, and I believe not a word, action, or even smile, escaped him; but what was most mortifying, he did not seem to approve one thing I did. Indeed, the Colonel appeared very thoughtful, and I don't think that he spoke ten words to me the whole day.

Walsingham leaves us to-morrow, (which, by the bye, I am rejoiced at) and, as he is going to Sir Thomas Glendore's, is the bearer of this letter

O lud, Jemima! this day week the major part of our company leaves us, and we shall soon follow them, when thy friend must prepare to give up her liberty.

It grows late, therefore adieu!

Yours,

C. FITZGERALD.

LETTER XXXVII.

Captain Hillgrove to Sir Charles Burton.

OBURTON, what have I done? I much fear, that by advising my friend Belville to marry Lady Clara Fitzgerald, I have contributed to ruin his peace. To be sure, it is not yet too late for him to retract. But Henry is too generous, after what has passed, to desert her. He still flatters himself that he shall be able to bring her to reason; though I am afraid he will find himself equally deceived and disappointed. He says she is the only woman except Miss Meadows for whom he ever entertained the least esteem; and as he knows it is impossible for him ever to be united to the latter, he will therefore marry Lady Clara, in the hope of reclaiming her.

That he is not happy, all his friends too plainly perceive. He strives to appear gay and cheerful in company; nay, even with me he conceals his real sentiments,

ments, and never mentions Miss Meadows's name except when he cannot avoid it. Still, however, I am convinced that all his thoughts are fixed upon her.—I am called to dinner; therefore adieu.

Sunday Evening.

YOU must not expect to see me again, as I have promised to attend my friend Henry to town, in order to be present at his wedding; and a fatal one I fear it will prove to him. That coxcomb Sir Cecil Mowbray has left us, as I did not by any means approve of his behaviour to Lady Clara. As to Belville, I am quite alarmed for him, as are likewise all his family. His father has desired him to break off the match, if that is the cause of his appearing so unhappy; but he refuses, and assures them with a smile, that he entertains sentiments of the highest regard and esteem for her Ladyship.

For my part, I am afraid Lady Clara's affection will not prove of the lasting kind. I have no doubt of her loving Belville at present; but I have as little doubt of her coquetting with the first man that flatters her after marriage. Not that I suspect she will be so regardless of her family and character, as to lose sight of her own or her husband's honour: at the same time I am of opinion that she will make Henry very unhappy. She possesses a great share of wit, to be sure; and the gay part of our sex, until they are thoroughly acquainted with her, cannot help admiring her, as she has a kind of drollery which cannot fail of pleasing; but to me she discovers a boldness and indelicacy which equally shocks and disgusts me.

I shall conclude, Burton, with this determination: Never to marry the woman who publicly avows her love for me to all the world.

With compliments to all the family,

Believe me yours ever,

EDWARD HILLGROVE.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

Clement Walsingham, Esq; to Colonel Belville.

My dear friend,

MY Emma is still the same angel I always thought her. But as I believe you never heard our little history, I will take the liberty of troubling you with it.

About two years ago I was called by some business into Dorsetshire, where, during my residence at a friend's house for a few days, I saw a Miss Walpole. I was instantly captivated with her; and on enquiring who, and of what family she was? was informed that she was the only daughter of a gentleman lately deceased, who had left her a very small fortune, but that she had great expectations at the death of Mrs. Hare (her mother's sister) in whose care she was left, and who was a widow with no children, but a very mercenary woman. Pleased with this account, I determined to pay my addresses to Miss Walpole; and having asked and obtained her aunt's permission to visit her, was received by the charming Emma in a manner that equally flattered and encouraged my hopes.

I had passed near two months in Dorsetshire, when I received a letter acquainting me that my brother, who was then living, was extremely ill, and very desirous of seeing me. Mrs. Hare I thought had for some time looked very coolly upon me; though at the same time I was not sensible of having given her any offence: I therefore took leave of Miss Walpole with a heavy heart.

On my arrival in London, I found that my brother's physicians deemed it indispensably necessary for him immediately to proceed to the South of France; and so urgent was Charles with me to accompany him thither, that I was obliged to consent. Before my departure,

I acquainted my dear Emma with the cause of my thus suddenly leaving England; however, she never received my letter.

The change of climate producing no alleviation of my brother's complaints, which were of the consumptive kind, in about half a year after our arrival at Nice, I had the misfortune to lose him. During all this time I never received a single line from Miss Walpole, though I had repeatedly written to her.

As soon as I had paid the last duties to my brother, I returned to England, and immediately hastened into Dorsetshire, where, on calling at Mrs. Hare's house, I was informed by the family who then occupied it, that the aunt was dead, and that they believed her niece was married. Alarmed at this intelligence, I instantly flew to my friends, but, to my equal mortification and surprise, received from them a confirmation of what I had heard before; with this addition, "that every body thought I was likewise married." Upon asking if they knew whether Miss Walpole had ever received any of my letters? the answer was, that they were certain she never had; that Mrs. Hare had died very suddenly; and that during the few hours she did live after she was attacked by the disease which occasioned her death, she appeared to be extremely unhappy and uneasy.

As I found Miss Walpole was now entirely lost to me, I again determined to quit England, and immediately crossed the water to Paris, where I have continued to reside till this winter, when I determined to return to my native country. You know what has since passed; as likewise, that when I left the Hall, Lady Clara and Lady Caroline gave me letters for the amiable Miss Meadows.

As it was late before I arrived at Sir Thomas Glendore's last night, I postponed my visit to The Wood till this morning. Upon enquiring if Miss Meadows was at home, the servant replied in the affirmative, and

and instantly conducted me to the parlour, where she sat at breakfast. Upon the door being opened, I saw Miss Meadows with two other ladies engaged very earnestly in conversation with a gentleman; so earnestly, indeed, that they did not at first perceive me; but on Miss Meadows turning her head, she exclaimed, "Heavens! Mr. Walsingham! I hope you are well, Sir!" On this the other two ladies turned round likewise, when one of them, whom I immediately knew to be Miss Walpole, uttered a loud shriek, and sunk on the floor. I fled towards her, at the same time exclaiming, "My Emma, my lovely Emma, do I once more behold thee!" then recollecting her marriage, I added, "No, not my Emma, but another's Emma."

She opened her fine eyes, at the same time saying, "What do you mean, Sir, by another's Emma?"

"Are you not married?"

"You are married, I believe, Sir?"

"No, by Heavens! nor——"

"No! then how have I been deceived!"

Mr. Thornton now interfered, and desiring us to be seated (for we were all standing) proposed that a mutual explanation should take place between us. I immediately complied with the proposal, and related the incidents I have before mentioned in this letter; after which I requested Miss Walpole to favour myself and the company with her story, which she did in the following concise manner:

"Soon after you left Dorsetshire, my Aunt received a letter, the contents of which she took care to secrete from me, though I suspected it to be your hand-writing. A short time afterwards she told me she had some bad news to communicate. On asking what it was, she answered, that she had received intelligence from a friend that Walsingham had married a girl whom he had long kept as his mistress, and that he was gone abroad with her. I

“ heard no more, as I fainted away; and on being
 “ carried to my chamber, was unable to be removed
 “ from it for some weeks, so deeply was I affected by
 “ the thoughts of your treachery. On my recovery,
 “ my Aunt, after congratulating me on the happy
 “ escape I had had from connecting myself with a
 “ man who appeared to have so little sense of honour
 “ as well as delicacy, advised me to give up all
 “ thoughts of you, and proposed that we should agree
 “ never more to mention your name; a proposal to
 “ which I readily acceded, and which was rigidly ob-
 “ served by both of us. In a few months afterwards
 “ she was suddenly seized with an indisposition, which
 “ in a few hours rendered her speechless. She seemed
 “ very anxious to communicate something to me,
 “ but was unable, and in a few hours expired. After
 “ taking possession of the fortune she had bequeathed
 “ me, I broke up house-keeping, and for some time
 “ visited about among my friends, till accident fortu-
 “ nately leading me to this charming spot, I was so
 “ pleased with it, that I immediately determined to
 “ make it my future residence, and have accordingly
 “ lived here more than a twelvemonth.”

Thus ended my lovely Emma. We then made our excuses to the company, and after some further conversation I returned to Sir Thomas Glendore's.

From this you see, my friend, I am at last in a fair way of being made happy; as I trust that Miss Walpole will not long delay our union.

I suppose by this time you are preparing for your nuptials; and that you may experience every happiness the married state can afford, is the sincere wish of

Yours sincerely,

CLEMENT WALSINGHAM.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIX.

Miss Walpole to Miss Dunbar.

AT length, my dear Mary, I entertain the hope of being rewarded for all my past sufferings, by being united to the man who has long, and I trust sincerely, loved me. My poor Aunt—what a scene of treachery did she act! But most sincerely do I forgive the pangs she has occasioned me, and hope she had time to implore forgiveness of her Creator.

Miss Meadows leaves us next Thursday. Miss Thornton complains of the hardship of losing both her friends together. I have some thoughts of inviting her to town with me, but fear it will not be in her power to accompany me, as her father daily expects the return of his annual fit of the gout. But I shall most certainly, my dear Mary, insist on your attending me to church. I propose to begin my journey on Sunday, and shall reach you on Monday, when I shall expect to find you in readiness. Walsingham sets off to-morrow for London to prepare every thing for my reception. We shall pass the winter in town, but return to this place early in the spring, to improve it for our country residence.

Walsingham speaks of Captain Hillgrove in the handsomest terms, and represents him as a most amiable character; all which, you may be sure, pleases me not a little. The Captain is going to town with Mr. Belville, to be present at his nuptials with Lady Clara Fitzgerald. I am very desirous to see this said Belville, having heard so much of him. Walsingham pities him exceedingly, as he says Lady Clara is not the woman to make him happy. Miss Meadows calls for me to take a walk; therefore adieu, and believe me to be for the last time,

Yours affectionately,

EMMA WALPOLE.

LETTER XL.

*Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.**London.*

HERE I am safely lodged once more, my dear Julia, after a very agreeable journey, considering the time of year. Lady Clara arrived in town yesterday: she came to Lady Caroline's immediately, and told us the wedding-day was fixed for Wednesday next. Heigh ho! Lady Caroline and I are going to a rout at the Earl of Baltimore's, Lady Clara's father. I shall then ~~once~~ more see Belville, but intend it shall be the last ~~time~~ before he is married. Lady Caroline informs me that he is much altered. I wonder what is the meaning of it.

Sir John Dudley called the day we came to town. I wish he would turn his thoughts from me to Lady Caroline. You cannot think, my dear, how that Lady is changed. From a gay giddy flirt, she is become quite grave and sedate, and behaves in such an affectionate manner to me, that I think I shall never wish to be parted from her; but she calls, therefore, adieu.

Eight o'Clock.

JUST going to Lady Clara's.—O my Julia, think what must be my feelings to see Belville—the only man I ever did or ever can love—for the last time, before he is married to another. Lady Caroline waits.

One o'Clock in the Morn.

I AM just returned, my Julia, from the Earl of Baltimore's; and as sleep seems to have fled my eyes, will write you an account of our visit.

We found a numerous company assembled in the drawing-room when we entered, but were surprised not to see Belville among them. Lady Clara immediately

diately came up to us, when Lady Caroline asked her if she did not expect the Colonel? "O lud! yes, "to be sure;" (returned the giddy creature) "is he "not here?"

At that instant Belville entered, leaning on the arm of another gentleman; but how amazed was I to see so total an alteration in him! His fine eyes have entirely lost their lustre, and his whole face has in one short month undergone a complete metamorphosis. He instantly advanced to the place where we were sitting, and after paying his compliments to Lady Clara and Lady Caroline turned to me.

"I hope I see Miss Meadows well."

I bowed, but trembled so, that I could scarcely speak.

"Give me leave, Madam, to present Captain "Hillgrove to you."

I again bowed, but said nothing; and more company joining us, the Colonel walked away, leaving his friend behind him, who, as Lady Clara said, in one of her letters, surveyed me with an attention which not a little disconcerted me; for though the Captain is not handsome, his eyes are so penetrating, that they seem to look one through. He soon in an easy and familiar manner entered into a conversation with me which was equally polite and entertaining, and I should have passed the time very agreeably, had not a triumvirate of impertinent females interrupted us by proposing cards. What was very singular, the Colonel disappeared soon after he entered the drawing-room; neither did I see him again till just as I was preparing to leave it, when he passed me with a grave bow, and a "Good evening to you, Madam." This was accompanied by a sigh, which I am afraid was echoed by myself, as I observed Captain Hillgrove, who stood near me, examine me with a very curious inquisitive eye. The Captain handed us to the carriage, and at the same time begged Lady Caroline's permission to
visit

visit her, to which she readily assented, and afterwards rallied me not a little on having made a conquest of the Captain's heart. I told her I was very sure of the contrary: she laughed, when the stopping of the carriage at her Ladyship's door put an end to the contest between her and your

JEMIMA MEADOWS.

L E T T E R X L I.

Captain Hillgrove to Sir Charles Burton.

London.

WELL, Burton, I have seen Miss Meadows, and am almost as much in love with her as my friend Henry was, and I am afraid is still. Good Heavens! what a contrast to Lady Clara, adorned with every grace which woman need possess, in mind, person and accomplishment.

When Belville first presented me, I was struck with her charming figure; but when I drew her into conversation (for poor Henry soon left us, unable to behold her without repining at his hard fate) the easy, elegant, sensible manner in which she delivered her sentiments on every subject delighted me, as I found none of that impertinent conceited wit which generally distinguishes the manners and conversation of our pretty women of quality: in short, *she*, and she alone deserves Henry Belville. I am inclined to think, too, that he is not quite indifferent to her, as she was seized with such a tremor when he addressed her, that she could scarcely return the compliments he paid her.

The moment she left the room he asked my opinion of her. Unwilling to nourish his passion by delivering my real sentiments, and not chusing to be guilty of the injustice of depreciating a woman who rises superior to all her sex, I evaded his question by replying, that I was unable to give my opinion till I had seen her a
second

second time. Poor Harry too plainly saw my evasion was affected, and shaking his head, said, "I never intend, my dear Ned, to mention the lovely Jemima more, except when necessity compels me. I can construe (continued he with a smile) very plainly the meaning of your answer, and will therefore never again put your friendship and good-nature to the test."

I have seen Miss Meadows once since, but had no opportunity of engaging her in conversation, as she was surrounded by *adorers*. "However, even in this situation she gave fresh cause for my admiration, behaving with so much ease and modest dignity, that I am certain not one of them could arrogate a preference. As to that coxcomb Sir Cecil Mowbray, she treats him with politeness and civility, as indeed she behaves to every one, and by that means acquires the esteem of all. In short, in my opinion, she and Belville were born for each other, though Destiny or Fate would seem to have placed insuperable bars to their union.

The day after to-morrow Henry loses his liberty. He affects to appear gay, but that his cheerfulness is assumed and forced is too certain.

Adieu, Burton, and believe me ever yours,
EDWARD HILLGROVE.

L E T T E R XLII.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

Wednesday Evening.

THIS morning was married Colonel Belville to Lady Clara Fitzgerald. Her Ladyship called this evening to enquire after my health; for you must know, my dear, that having insisted on my officiating at the wedding as one of her bride-maids, I was obliged to promise her, or appear particular. However,
having

having secretly determined not to go, I was under the necessity this morning of pleading an indisposition, for which reason her Ladyship honoured me with the visit above mentioned. She appeared to be all life and spirits, and never looked handsomer.

Lady Caroline, who attended for me as bride-maid, informed me, that Lady Clara went through the ceremony with greater fortitude and recollection than Belville; and added, that she was very certain her Ladyship was not the woman of his choice.

As Lady Caroline did not seem inclined to descend to particulars, and as I now found the indisposition which I had counterfeited in the morning, to be *real* in the evening, I begged leave to retire to my chamber. I did not, however, go to bed immediately, as you will perceive by the date of this letter, but preferred sitting down to give my Julia the preceding narrative, which I shall not close till to-morrow, when, if any other incidents worth relating occur, it shall be resumed by

Her ever affectionate friend,
JEMIMA MEADOWS.

LETTER XLIII.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

IN CONTINUATION.

Thursday Evening.

WHEN I went down to breakfast this morning (which I did with a full determination to be to be chearful) I found Lady Caroline sitting with Sir John Dudley, Mr. Darcy, and Colonel Moleworth. After paying my compliments to the company, I took my seat, and we entered into conversation: this, however, was soon interrupted by the arrival of two female visitors, a Miss Manners, and a Lady Susan Pelham, who

who were scarcely seated before Miss Manners turning to me said, "Pray, Madam, is Lady Clara Fitzgerald married?"

"She is, Madam."

"What, yesterday morning? Well, I am sure, she is greatly to be pitied; for Mr. Belville, I fear, will make her but an indifferent husband."

"But an indifferent husband, Madam!" exclaimed I, looking at her with astonishment.

"Pray, Madam, may I take the liberty of asking your reasons for entertaining such an unfavourable opinion of my friend Belville?" said Sir John Dudley.

"Why, Lord, Sir, you never heard such a character as he bears! He only keeps at this present time three mistresses: one is an Opera-Girl; the second is said to be one of the Actresses at Covent-Garden Theatre; while the character of the third is so very obscure, that nobody knows any thing of her." But that my dear Julia may more readily enter into the spirit of this very extraordinary conversation, I shall endeavour to detail it in the very words of the individuals who took part in it.

Lady C. BENSON. "I am amazed, Ladies, at what you say! Surely, you are misinformed."

Sir JOHN DUDLEY. "Indeed, Ladies, I implicitly subscribe to her Ladyship's opinion."

Lady SUSAN and Miss MANNERS. (*castily*) "I am sure that what we assert is true."

At that moment Captain Hillgrove entered, and bowing to the company advanced to me.

Captain HILLGROVE. "I hope I see Miss Meadows well."

JEMIMA. "Very well, I thank you, Sir.—You are just come in time to defend the character of your friend Colonel Belville."

Captain

Captain HILLGROVE. "I am always ready to defend those I esteem, Madam: but who, pray, alledges any thing against him?"

Colonel MOLESWORTH. "Why, it has been just asserted, Captain, that the Colonel has only at this present time three ladies in keeping."

Captain HILLGROVE. "Indeed! Belville keep three mistresses! Who could propagate such a scandalous story?"

Miss MANNERS. "Lord bless me! why, I had it from Sir Charles Worsley, who told me he had it from Lady Betty Vincent."

Captain HILLGROVE. "Then, Madam, I will venture to affirm, that both Sir Charles Worsley and Lady Betty Vincent told you an infamous falsehood. I will not pretend to say that Belville never formed such a connexion as has been alluded to, for he has always been as partial to the fair sex, as I believe it is known the ladies in general have been to him."

Here a conscious blush suffused the cheek of your *Jemima*.

Lady SUSAN. "Well, I'm amazed; for I heard it as a fact: nay more, it was added, that he seduced one of his mistresses, who is a country girl, from her friends; and that this made him so unhappy on his wedding-day."

Here I thought a sigh seemed to escape the Captain.

Captain HILLGROVE (taking a hand of each). "The tongue of scandal, my dear ladies, is ever ready to calumniate those who are innocent. For my part, when I hear such tales, I keep them within my own breast, till by proper enquiry I am enabled to discover the truth. If the parties have been wronged, I think it my duty to endeavour to clear them: if, on the contrary, I find the report to be true, I never suffer it to spread further through my means; well knowing, that the world are ever ready to expose those faults in others, which perhaps they are at

"the

“ the very same time committing themselves. As to
 “ my friend Belville, I have known him from child-
 “ hood: he was always of a much livelier and gayer
 “ turn than myself; but a heart more honest, liberal,
 “ and humane, never glowed in the breast of man.
 “ His purse has been ever open to distress: in short,
 “ few young men are possessed of more amiable or va-
 “ luable qualities. I will not pretend to say that he is
 “ without his faults (for, indeed, where shall we find
 “ any one without some failings?) but as to the
 “ charge of seduction, I am convinced that he is in-
 “ capable of such a crime: indeed, I will venture to
 “ affirm, that he never attempted to obtain the affec-
 “ tion of any woman till he was certain he could offer
 “ his own in return. As to keeping a mistress, I
 “ think I can with equal confidence assert, that he
 “ never had been addicted to that folly, as I have
 “ heard him always warmly condemn those who at-
 “ tached themselves to women of that description. He
 “ is now married; and I sincerely wish him every hap-
 “ piness the state can afford.”

Thus ended the Captain! And now, my Julia,
 are you not more than half in love with him for thus
 nobly defending his friend? I assure you that I am.
 —But to proceed in my narrative: The two ladies ap-
 peared to be confused and embarrassed, and said they
 should never credit either of their authors in future;
 and more company coming in, they soon after took
 their leave.

Captain Hillgrove now drew his chair next to mine,
 and was so obliging as to admire my work (for I am
 working a gown for Lady Caroline in tambour) which
 I assure you profited not a little by the preceding con-
 versation.

Indeed, Julia, this Captain is a great favourite of
 mine; but I must mention one thing, viz. I always
 observe he seldom if ever mentions Colonel Belville's
 name without a sigh, and that he avoids speaking of
 Lady

Lady Clara as much as possible. This, you will perhaps say, is a foolish circumstance to remark. It is so: I entirely coincide with you in that opinion, and therefore will think no more of it.

I had the pleasure of a visit from the amiable Miss Walpole yesterday. She looks much better than she did when I first saw her at The Wood, and appears to be in high spirits. She told me that she wrote to you on Monday, and that the wedding-day is fixed for next Tuesday. She brought Miss Dunbar with her, who seems deserving of her friendship. Lady Caroline has just sent for me; I must therefore bid you adieu for the present, but will resume my pen in the morning.

Friday Morn.

I TOLD you last night that Lady Caroline had summoned me, being desirous of shewing me a card from Lady Clara Belville, inviting her Ladyship and myself to a ball and supper on Thursday next. Though I wish rather to avoid than meet the Colonel, yet I must accept the invitation, or appear very rude. To be sure, it may be impossible always—But I am interrupted again.

Friday Evening.

IT was Lady Clara who enquired for me. Upon my entering the parlour, her Ladyship began to chide me for not having called upon her: “but I will forgive you (continued she) if you and Lady Caroline will fill up a small party I have engaged this evening.”

“I must beg your Ladyship to excuse me (returned I, for I have got such a terrible cold, that I am totally unfit for company.”

“Lord, my dear, I am sure you look extremely well; ’tis only a few select friends. Positively I will not be denied. Lady Caroline has consented, and I insist on your coming with her: besides, child,

“your

"your favourite will be there. Now I am sure you will." So saying, away she tripped, not giving me time to enquire who she meant.

I am sure I don't know whom she means by my favourite, except it is Captain Hillgrove, and I am certain that she never heard me say whether I liked or disliked him; for ever since she told Colonel Belville that I hated him, I have been very cautious of giving my opinion of any one in her Ladyship's presence: however, go I must. Ah! my dear, I now wish, for the first time in my life, to be my own mistress.

I must again break off, my dear friend, to dress for my visit; and as this letter is of a sufficient length, will send it off without adding any more, than that I am

My dear Julia's
Affectionate friend,
JEMIMA MEADOWS.

L E T T E R XLIV.

Miss Walpole to Miss Thornton.

TUESDAY next, my dear Julia, is the day appointed for your friend to resign her liberty. I wish I could persuade you to take a trip to town and see the ceremony performed.

I have not yet seen Miss Meadows, but promise myself the pleasure of calling upon her to-day.

Let me see—what other questions does your Ladyship ask?—O! have I seen Colonel Belville!—I have, my dear, and I assure you that he deserves all, nay more than we have heard of him; for I think I never saw a more handsome nor more expressive face in my life. Walsingham introduced him yesterday. He sat about half an hour, and then took his leave, not without pressing me very much to visit his Lady. During
the

the short time he staid, I thought he appeared rather melancholy.

I have likewise seen Sir John Dudley, and think him very little inferior to Mr. Belville.

Thus, my dear, I have given you my opinion of both these gentlemen, as you requested; at least as far as my judgment of them extends.

I am going to the Play to night, therefore must conclude, or I shall not have time to pay my intended visit to Miss Meadows, nor dress before dinner.

Adieu, my dear,

And believe me yours,

EMMA WALPOLE.

LETTER LXV.

Miss Meadows to Miss Thornton.

LADY Caroline and I went about seven yesterday evening to Lady Clara Belville's. On entering the drawing-room, we found her Ladyship at her harpsichord, with Sir Cecil Mowbray leaning on the back of her chair, and Colonel Belville and Captain Hillgrove standing engaged very earnestly in conversation near the fire. As soon as the servant had announced our names, Lady Clara instantly arose, and running to me exclaimed, "There's a good girl!" "But I thought you would come," (at the same time tapping my shoulder) "after what I had said to you this morning."

I coloured, though I scarcely knew for what, and replied, "Indeed, my Lady, I don't comprehend you."

She only laugh'd, and on Lady Caroline desiring we might not interrupt her song, ran to her harpsichord again.

The Colonel now advanced, and having paid his compliments to me, as he had before done to Lady Caroline,

rosine, with his usual grace led me to a seat, and placed himself in another chair next to mine. We remained silent for some time: at last the Colonel observing it was very cold, I replied in the affirmative; and again we were silent: in short, he seemed quite at a loss for a subject of conversation, though I never before knew him to be deficient; and on more company coming in he took occasion to leave his seat, and afterwards affected to shun me during the whole evening: the Captain, however, supplied his place, though I thought his manner, too, was extremely grave and reserved.

I observed Lady Clara's behaviour with great attention, and it pains me to inform you, that she appeared the same giddy creature she was before marriage. As to Sir Cecil Mowbray, on the entrance of more company, he quitted her Ladyship to entertain me, as he thought; but as I was not disposed to listen to him, he soon left me, and attached himself to her Ladyship again. In short, I began to think there must be something extremely formidable or forbidding in my appearance, as the men seemed to avoid me, while the women, though several surrounded me, exchanged not a single syllable with me.

I had not, however, sat long in this disagreeable situation, when a tall thin man entered, who bowed to Lady Clara as he passed, but took not the least notice of any other person. A young Lady who sat next me, and had hitherto observed a profound silence, now suddenly exclaimed, "Lord ble's me! if there is not the *Silent Man!*"

I was just going to request an explanation from her, when this remarkable personage advanced to the fire, near which I happened to be seated, and stood for some moments with his back towards it, his eyes rivetted sometimes on the ground, and sometimes on me. This was not a little disconcerted me, you will readily suppose, as the attention of the company seemed to be directed to

to him, and a general silence ensued. At length he twirled himself round three times, then stopped, and, turning to me, said, "It is very cold this evening, Madam."

"It is so, Sir."

Again he was silent for some time; then again addressing himself to me, "Was you at the Pantheon last night, Madam?"

"No, Sir."

"No!" repeated he, sitting down in a chair which Captain Hillgrove had just quitted before he entered.

I was very much vexed at this circumstance, as the eyes of all the company were fixed upon us. At length, to my great relief, Colonel Belville proposed cards; which being immediately assented to, he advanced to me, and asked if I chose to play? Upon my desiring to be excused, he turned to the *Silent Man*, and repeated the same question; when the latter bowed, but made no answer. The Colonel smiled, and walked away.

The whole company were now seated at the card-tables, except myself and my *silent* neighbour, and a general buz of "Play alone—ask leave—spadille—manille, and basfo"—took place of that taciturnity which had reigned on the entrance of this gentleman. I continued silent some time, and was just rising to go to the card-table where Lady Clara was seated, when my companion asked me, "if I had seen Miss Burnby since she became Lady Hervey?"

I could not help smiling at this odd question; but replied, "I have not, Sir"

"Do you know her, Madam?"

"I have occasionally seen her."

"Do you live in town, Madam?" continued this strange mortal.

"I do, Sir."

"Are you married, Madam?"

"Sir?" returned I.

"The

"The—the—weather has been exceedingly cold for some time," replied he, instead of repeating his impertinent question.

I did not think proper to answer him; but quitting my seat, crossed the room to Lady Clara's table.

"For Heaven's sake, Lady Clara, (exclaimed I) pray tell me, who is that strange mortal?"

"Lord, my dear, don't you know him? It is Mr. Mordaunt, who goes by the name of the *Silent Man*, as he very often enters a room full of company, and quits it again without speaking a syllable. I really believe he has said more to you this evening than he ever did to any woman before in his life."

The cards being now dealt, put an end to our conversation; and not chusing to return to my former seat, as this singular being still kept his, I stood and observed the game. I had not been long thus engaged before Sir John Dudley, Mr. Darcy, and Colonel Moleworth entered the room, and immediately engaged me in conversation; when happening to mention a favourite air in the opera of *L'Olimpiade*, they all intreated the favour of me to sing it. I persisted in refusing them for some time, till Lady Clara joining in their request, and adding, "Indeed, my dear Miss Meadows, you should be more willing to oblige your friends, especially as the charming Pacchierotti himself don't sing the air better than you do," I found it in vain any longer to resist, therefore sat down to the harpsichord, but acquitted myself very indifferently.

During the whole time I was singing, Belville's eyes were fixed upon me; and as I had never played or sung in his hearing before, his attention as well as the respectful silence of the whole company disconcerted me not a little: however, he said nothing, though every one else honoured me with the most flattering commendations; and I was returning to the table I had before left, when Mr. Mordaunt advancing towards

wards me, and taking my hand, said, "I have heard
" many fine fingers, Madam, both in this country
" and in Italy, but never remember to have been so
" much charmed by the powers of any voice as I have
" been by yours." He then made a most profound
bow, and left the room without taking the least notice
of any other person. To my great joy he uttered this
extravagant compliment in a voice too low to be heard
by any one except myself and Sir John Dudley, who
stood next me; however, I did not escape the raillery
of Lady Clara, who congratulated me on the conquest
I had made of the *Silent Man*. I only smiled, and
Lady Caroline making a motion to go, I readily as-
sented, rejoiced to put an end to a visit which had oc-
casioned me no little embarrassment and distress.

As soon as we came home, we retired to our respec-
tive chambers; and as I found myself sleepy, I deferred
giving my Julia an account of my visit till this morn-
ing. Remember, my dear, if you think my letters
tedious, it is your own fault, as you enjoined me to
be circumstantial.

I am going to the Opera in the evening, where I
hope to see or hear something that will furnish subject-
matter of entertainment or amusement for the next
letter you receive from

Yours sincerely,

JEMIMA MEADOWS.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

